THE SHAPING OF A PILGRIM

A DISCUSSION OF THE ENGLISH AND CONTINENTAL RELIGIOUS LITERATURE INFLUENCING SEPARATISM AND THE PILGRIMS

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by

Corinne Swaney

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Francis Cooke, an ancestor of mine, was one of that small band of struggling and straggling "saincts," better known as Separatists, who came to America on the Mayflower in 1620. Presumably Cooke was one of the original Scrooby congregation which was motivated and led by William Brewster, ruling elder of the group. It is believed that Cooke was born in Blyth, a small hamlet near Scrooby, one of the posts along the Great North Road leading from London to Scotland and the original home of Brewster. Undoubtedly of the yeoman class, Cooke came to embrace the religious principles of the Separatists, although his background may have been Roman Catholic or Anglican.

This thesis deals with that part of the religious literature of Tudor and Jacobean England, as well as that of the European continent of those days, which presumably could have reached the small villages on or near the Great North Road. Such literature could and undoubtedly did influence Francis Cooke's thinking to such an extent that he would leave all that he had known and possessed to risk his life in order to seek elsewhere the religious liberty he was determined to have. A trip to England corroborated and substantiated for me many of the pertinent historical facts and provided me an insight into the geographical and environmental factors which helped to influence Francis Cooke, serving in this work as a synthesis of Pilgrim thought, to make the greatest decision of his life.

FOREWORD

This work is a fusion of historical reality, utilized wherever research could provide factual or pertinent information, and intentional fiction. By the employment of the latter, it is hoped that Francis Cooke, man of the Mayflower and my ancestor, can emerge from the shadows of history as something more than a name on that ship's passenger list or on the Mayflower Compact and other documents. Legend, supposition, and even the search for American tradition oftentimes have dimmed the simple, essential nature of the Pilgrims' spiritual experience.

With the utilization of the actual information available concerning Francis Cooke, I have attempted to re-create his thinking; not, however, with the assumption that it is possible to know what or all that he may have read that could have influenced him to become a Separatist. Rather, he has been viewed as a synthesis of the Pilgrim spirit which searched for the living God of the Bible beyond the limitations of religious denominations and ritualistic observances and customs. Assuming Francis in this role, I could present, through him, a study of the continental and English literature that I believe affected and effected the Pilgrims' religious belief which was, as simply stated in Hebrews 11.6: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

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CHAPTER I

OF SUNDRIE TOWNES AND VILAGES

Approximately one hundred fifty miles north of London, centrally located in that section of the English Midlands where Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Nottinghamshire adjoin, is the area from whence originated in the latter part of the sixteenth and the early years of the seventeenth centuries a small group of religious independents or Separatists. The term "Puritan" is not sufficiently comprehensive for this group; for the Puritans, a name given derisively at that time, were those who wished to purify the Church of England of certain elements of Roman papacy such as episcopal hierarchy and elaborate ceremony. The Separatists, however, were not content merely to purify the Church of England for, as they read the New Testament, they found in it no trace of ecclesiastical distinctions nor any power in any body, religious or political outside that of the congregation itself, that provided for appointments of the clergy.

Due, therefore, to their deep and abiding religious beliefs gleaned through personal convictions and influenced by English and continental events and religious literature, this minute and, at that time, inconsequential band of English dissenters decided, at perilous risk, to disassociate itself

from the powerful Church of England of Jacobean times. They would form a colony on foreign soil for "ye glorie of God and advancemente of ye Christian faith," according to the compact signed in the cabin of the Mayflower. This colony would be named New Plymouth in honor of that English city whose inhabitants had shown so much hospitality to the little group as it experienced a delay there on the eve of departure for America. Quite naturally they would call the area surrounding the colony New England.

As the Separatists believed they were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13), they much later were to receive the name "Pilgrims" from those who would venerate them. These Separatists were more than reformers as many of the early leaders of the Reformation had been; they were innovators.

William Bradford, the guiding spirit of the Pilgrims for many of those early years in America and their eye-witness historian, gives this account of their origin: ". . . for they were of sundrie townes and vilages, some in Notingamshire, some of Lincollinshire, and some of Yorkshire, wher they border nearest togeather."[1]

The Pilgrim country of England thus may be considered to have had as its northern limit the little village of Austerfield; Worksop as its western limit; Sturton le Steeple

[1]William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, ed. Harvey Wish (New York: Capricorn Books, 1962), p. 27.

and Gainsborough as the eastern limits; and the southern border of the area was within the thirty-five miles south to the famous city of Nottingham. The great city of York lies some forty-five miles to the north, while Sherwood Forest, now to the southwest of the area, extended in ancient and medieval times almost to Austerfield.

Within the area there are a number of towns and villages that owe any fame that they may have obtained to a variety of interesting reasons, although this section of the country is not one of the heavily-traveled tourist attractions for the English. Some of the localities still may possess a Roman, Saxon, or Norman gateway, bridge, church, priory, or other edifice, or part thereof; they may have played some part in an intriguing event in English history; they may have been the birthplace of a Pilgrim Father or a Pilgrim pastor or a place where sermons were heard which helped to mold and define the Separatist beliefs; too, they may have served as clandestine meeting places where the group could hold religious services or where they could plan a manner of departure from the area. Scrooby, Austerfield, Worksop, Blyth, and Babworth, some of the more important Pilgrim localities, retain fascinating old churches, some of which are among the most ancient in England.

Since very early times the northern section of England, from this area now known as the Pilgrim country northward to the Scottish border, was almost a foreign country so far as

the royal court in or near London was concerned. Population was always less dense in this district, and the people were rougher and more ignorant of events outside their own sphere than they were in other sections of England. Rebellion was more likely to break out in the northern shires or counties as royal decrees lost much of their potency when delivered by a monarch so far away. Education was more difficult to obtain in the north where there were fewer schools which, at best, seemed backward when compared to educational facilities in London and the southern part of the country. Romanism retained a much stronger hold for a longer period in this center of England with monasteries, cathedrals, and churches in great abundance here. Although there always had been bitter sectional feeling in England, much of it due to the War of the Roses and conflicts concerning the right of succession to the English throne, still the people of the Pilgrim country lived rather quietly and backwardly so far as culture, politics, and economics were concerned until the Tudor era erupted at about the beginning of the sixteenth century with the accession of Henry VII to the English throne in 1485. New ideas began to conflict with older, established ways of thought, and new social and religious philosophies swept through England, ushering in the English Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation in that country.

In very olden times in the Pilgrim country of the Midlands the land was swampy, as this area is a region of lowland

valleys formed by the rivers Ryton and Idle, both of which flow into the Trent. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, Dutch and English engineers had undertaken great drainage projects which resulted in a sizable increase in the amount of tillable land.[1] For centuries inhabitants of this area, like the inhabitants of other sections of England, had tended their animals and had practiced excellent husbandry while planting barley, wheat, and vegetables on their lords' lands, or on commonly-owned lands, or, as the sixteenth century progressed, on perhaps their own parcels of land. The English yeoman class now was emerging, the class of the free farmer whose position was somewhere between that of the gentleman, or the gentry, above him and that of the husbandman or farm laborer below him.[2] The social caste system was less rigid here in the north than it was in the southern part of the country, and here money began to matter more than pedigree. Heretofore the common country people of England had paid homage and taxes to their local great lords, some of whom maintained tremendous estates and castles on extensive holdings of land. Such taxes often were paid in exchange for a certain protection dispensed by the lords,

[1]William Elliot Griffis, The Pilgrims in Their Three Homes (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1899), p. 14.

[2]Albert F. Schmidt, The Yeoman in Tudor and Stuart England (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1968), p. 4.

many of whom were ecclesiastical personages. Such were the successive archbishops of York, for example, who owned Scrooby as far back as the Domesday Book (1086), and who had built a palace or hunting lodge there to enjoy as they toured the diocese attending to religious and political matters.[1]

With the emergence of the yeoman class, however, the old manorial system of landholding was diminishing to some extent. The dissolution of the monasteries in 1536-39 and Henry VIII's subsequent distribution of some of the confiscated monastic lands to his favorites helped to provide the king with additional strong support from nobles who were suddenly land-enriched. Thus the manorial system inherited from the Middle Ages did not suddenly disappear. With the change wrought by this system's gradual decline and decadence, however, there came into existence in the Pilgrim country and all over England the controversial practice of enclosure farming. Higher prices of wool called for more and larger sheep pastures, which were enclosed many times at the expense of everyone in the community or of those less fortunate individuals who could not pay higher rentals. Sometimes greedy yeomen or landowners would encroach upon the old common lands of the villages, and they would take away from the people the land belonging to the public and not to the lords. When land was

[1]Richard Brown, Scrooby, The Home of William Brewster (Gainsborough, England: G. W. Belton Ltd., 1970), p. 1.

cultivated, it supplied work for many men; when sheepraising supplanted the raising of crops, a living for only a few was provided. This, in addition to the fact that in the late sixteenth century in the six northern counties of England most of the land in the form of great estates was held by six families, combined to make the lot of the small farmer of this area increasingly hard.[1]

Sir Thomas More, great English humanist and statesman of the early sixteenth century, was acutely aware of the problems created by the enclosure system when in 1516 he wrote in Utopia:

> . . . your shepe that were wont to be so meke and tame, and so smal eaters, now, as I heare saye, be become so great devowerers and so wylde, that they eate up, and swallow downe the very men them selfes. They consume, destroye, and devoure whole fieldes, howses, and cities. For looke in what partes of the realme doth growe the fynest and therfore dearest woll, there noblemen and gentlemen, yea and certeyn abbottes, holy men no doubt, not contenting them selfes with the yearely revenues and profytes, that were wont to grow to theyr forefathers and predecessours of their landes, nor beynge content that they live in rest and pleasure nothinge

[1]Griffis, op. cit., p. 28.

> profiting, yea much noyinge the weale publique, leave no grounde for tillage, thei inclose al into pastures; thei throw doune houses; they plucke downe townes, and leave nothing standynge, but only the churche to be made a shepehowse. And as thoughe you loste no small quantity of grounde by forestes, chases, laundes and parkes, those good holy men turne all dwellinge places and all glebeland into desolation and wildernes.[1]

So during the sixteenth century the people of England were wrestling with great socioeconomic problems as momentous changes were taking place within and without their country which would bring England to the pinnacle of world supremacy. English discoveries in the New World, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and crafty and successful statesmanship, in addition to changes in the economic system and the flowering of a cultural renaissance, gave England its renowned Elizabethan greatness, although not one of the pressing problems of the century was solved satisfactorily, especially that of religion.

From its beginning on the continent the impulse to reform the Church had been interspersed with political elements. Thus the age that saw the shattering of a medieval religious

[1]Sir Thomas More, "Utopia," Three Renaissance Classics, ed. Burton A. Milligan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), Book I, pp. 124-125.

status quo also found itself in a world of almost total social and economic change. Religion during the reign of the Tudors was in a state of constant flux due to English and continental influences. Henry VIII desired power personally and nationally, and he obtained it by opposing a foreign tyrant who, in this case, was the Pope even though it meant religious strife within Henry's kingdom. He did not particularly desire to aid those who wished to accept the reformed faith as he continued to persecute so-called heretics, and he retained, to a great extent, Catholic theology which became Anglicanism with Henry, rather than the Pope, as its head. During the short reign of his son, Edward VI, Protestantism was well established in England, and an English prayer book showing marks of great reform was published. More extremists were made prelates, and many conservative bishops lost their positions.

Mary Tudor, daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, began her reign in 1553, with moderation and tolerance shown, for the most part, toward those who wished to change their faith, with the reinstatement of the bishops who had been deprived of their offices under Edward, and with an almost general return to the religious policies of Henry VIII. Mary's marriage to the Catholic King Philip of Spain, however, led to the re-establishment of papal authority with a possibility of monastic property restoration. There followed an inevitable resistance to these policies by the English people

and an almost audible sigh of relief from the nation when Mary died in 1558.

Elizabeth I, Mary's successor and the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, attempted to follow a middle course in religious matters. She understood that, although a great many people in England remained Catholic, the Protestants were more influential because they were, to a great extent, the landed gentry and the wealthy citizens of the towns and cities. The Church of England under both Henry VIII and Elizabeth retained the ritual and established hierarchy of Roman Catholicism, with the exception that the monarch was its supreme head rather than the Pope. Its dogma of justification by faith and the nature of the sacraments came primarily from the great English and continental reformers. Under Elizabeth privacy of conscience and widely different beliefs were allowed to some extent. Catholics, however, were not content because there was too much liberty, and Protestants were not happy because there was not enough.

James I, the first Stuart king of England, decreed during his reign from 1603 to 1625 that the Puritans were to conform to the doctrines of the Church of England. If they did not, they were to leave the country. During this time, therefore, most of the radical Puritans, unwilling to compromise with the Church of England and unable to change it, fled to the New World. Such a group originated in Scrooby.

CHAPTER II

SCROOBY--STAGE FOR SEPARATISM

Scrooby was the heart of the Pilgrim country. It was the birthplace of William Brewster, the leader of the group, and also the meeting place for the reformers and the first site of their church. The main street or Low Road of Scrooby was part of the Great North Road which linked London and Edinburgh, Scotland, and which was already old at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Proceeding through Barnby Moor, the Road continued on through Torworth and Ranskill to Scrooby, through the village, across the mill stream where Monk's Mill was operated by a brotherhood, over the river Ryton, and then northward, leaving Nottinghamshire and entering Yorkshire. As it was the only road joining north and south, the Great North Road was extremely important.

Even before the time of the Reformation, Scrooby had been of some ecclesiastical importance, for several monastic orders were established nearby--the abbeys of Rufford, Roche, and Welbeck and the priories of Mattersey, Blyth, and Worksop. Its main importance, however, was that it was owned by the archbishops of York, and it had become the site of the archbishop's palace or the manor house probably built during the twelfth century. It was used frequently as a hunting lodge

or as a place in which to stay while the various archbishops visited the diocese, and during the first half of the sixteenth century it was visited by personages of great eminence. Margaret, daughter of Henry VII and sister of Henry VIII, stayed in the palace in June of 1503 on her way north to Scotland to marry James IV. Cardinal Wolsey visited the palace in 1530 amidst his usual great pageantry, spending three months there before continuing on to York. He had been Archbishop of York for sixteen years before making a visit to the province over which he exercised authority. Henry VIII in 1541 held a privy council in the palace, which by that time was sumptuous enough to contain thirty-nine chambers or apartments with a private chapel, a refectory lined with carved oak panels, and a moat made from diverted waters of the Ryton and which was crossed by a drawbridge.[1]

John Leland, antiquarian traveler, librarian and chaplain to Henry VIII, described the house in the 1540's as "a great Manor place . . . standynge withyn a mote, and buildid in to courtes . . . and buildid all of Tymbre saving the Front of the Haule, that is of bricke."[2]

Scrooby's importance so far as the Pilgrims were concerned began in 1575 with the appointment by Archbishop Grindal of York of William Brewster's father as bailiff of the

[1]Griffis, Pilgrims in Their Three Homes, pp. 27-34.

[2]Brown, Scrooby, p. 1.

manor of Scrooby and master of the posts. This meant that the senior Brewster was to collect manorial fees and rents for the Archbishop, forward court officials and dispatches, and supply fresh horses for royal messengers traveling north or south. As Scrooby was the twelfth post along the Great North Road, it naturally would be a center for current news, local gossip, and diverse opinions.[1]

Young William was nine at the time of his father's appointment. He received his formal education either from a private tutor, who may have been one of the few university men in the area, or perhaps he attended classes in Retford or Gainsborough where there were schools of some standing in which a student could obtain a knowledge of Latin and prepare for the university.[2]

Entering Cambridge in 1580, Brewster studied subjects such as Latin, Greek, logic, and rhetoric and had to attend morning and evening religious services as well as the regular Sunday sermons at Peterhouse College, which he attended, and at the University Church. Here he undoubtedly encountered many Protestant ideas, and perhaps the word "separatism" entered his vocabulary for the first time. Cambridge was considered by most people at that time a university for the common people,

[1]Ibid., p. 2.

[2]Walter H. Burgess, John Robinson, Pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers (London, England: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), pp. 28-29.

and it stood for freedom and progress. Oxford University, on the other hand, symbolized rank and royalty, conservative thinking, and great faith in the status quo of the church and of the government.[1]

After three years at Cambridge, Brewster in 1583 had the opportunity to enter the service of Sir William Davison, one of Queen Elizabeth's chief court ministers, and he accompanied that important man to Holland on a diplomatic mission. Brewster learned a great deal about the life at court with its glamour and its intrigues during his years with Davison. Davison, however, was blamed by Elizabeth for his part in the affair of the warrant for the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots. He was dismissed from the court and was imprisoned in the Tower of London for two years, during which Brewster remained loyal to him and lived in quarters near the Tower in order to serve his former master as best he could. When Davison returned to country life after his release from the Tower, Brewster returned to Scrooby and helped with his father's responsibilities as postmaster there. After the death of his father in 1590, he held his position for the next seventeen years. Here he undoubtedly renewed his acquaintanceship with Sir Samuel Sandys, who now owned Scrooby manor.[2]

[1]Griffis, pp. 45-46.

[2]George F. Willison, Saints and Strangers (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1945), pp. 36-38.

In 1576, not long after Brewster's father had become bailiff at Scrooby, Edwin Sandys succeeded as Archbishop of York Archbishop Grindal who, in turn, became Archbishop of Canterbury. Queen Elizabeth in 1582 wished to make Scrooby manor a royal hunting lodge and demanded from Sandys a long lease. He, to thwart her ambitions for the acquisition of the manor, entered a plea of poverty which Elizabeth considered not politically expedient to overrule.[1] Sandys, however, proceeded to divide large sections of church property among his six sons with Scrooby manor going to the eldest, Sir Samuel. In this manner the Archbishop actually made his sons land-powerful through acquisition of church goods. In 1603 James VI of Scotland passed through Scrooby on his way to London to become King James I of England. It is entirely possible that Brewster may have served him, perhaps providing fresh horses for the entourage. Later James wrote to the prelate of York offering to buy the manor house but to no avail, as the property had been transferred to Sir Samuel Sandys who did not wish to dispose of it.[2]

The religious compromise that Elizabeth attempted to maintain during her reign was reflected carefully by those archbishops who retained their positions under her rule. Archbishop Sandys, for example, whose family long had been

[1]Ibid., p. 28.

[2]Griffis, p. 69.

friends of the Brewster family, gave a rather moderate opinion on the question of the continuance of ceremonies in the Church of England. This opinion, oddly placed according to present-day thought in the preamble to the Archbishop's will, was given in 1588:

> . . . Fourthly, concerning rites and ceremonies by political constitutions authorised amongst us. As I am and have been persuaded that such as are set down by public authority in this Church of England, are no way either ungodly or unlawful, but may with good conscience, for order and obedience sake, be used of a good Christian (for the private baptism to be ministered by women, I take neither to be prescribed nor permitted) . . . so have I ever been and presently am persuaded, that some of them be not so expedient for the Church now; but in the Church reformed and in all this time of the gospel, wherein the seed of the scripture hath so long been sown, they may better be disused by little and little than more and more urged. Howbeit, I do easily acknowledge our Ecclesiastical Polity, in some points, may be bettered; so I do utterly mislike, even in my conscience, all such rude and indigested platforms, as have been more lately and boldly, than either learnedly or wisely preferred; tending not to the reformation but to the destruction of the

> Church of England. The particulars of both sorts reserved to the discretion of the godly, which of the latter I only say thus: that the state of a small private church, and the form of a large Christian kingdom, neither would long like, not at all brook, one and the same Ecclesiastical government.[1]

Sir Edwin Sandys, son of the Archbishop and brother of Sir Samuel who owned Scrooby, was educated at Oxford and was a member of Parliament who was committed politically to opposing the principle of the divine right of kings. He believed that the common people had certain liberties and privileges which were their natural birthright.[2] He sympathized with the more cultivated and rational Separatists, particularly with the Scrooby group, and he played a vital role in the subsequent obtaining of legal permission from the royal court for the Scrooby group to remove itself to America. Such permission he could and did help effect as he was treasurer and an influential member of the First Virginia Company.[3]

[1]Reverend Joseph Hunter, Collections concerning the Church or Congregation of Protestant Separatists Formed at Scrooby in North Nottinghamshire, in the Time of King James I (London, England: John Russell Smith, 1854), Appendix, p. 154.

[2]Commonwealth History of Massachusetts, ed. Albert Bushnell Hart (New York: The States History Co., 1927-28), 1, pp. 11-13.

[3]Willison, p. 107.

About 1600 Sir Edwin wrote Europae Speculum which contained observations he had made while touring Europe for the express purpose of noting the state of religion in the various Protestant countries. Addressed to Archbishop Whitgift of Canterbury, that prelate who once had been a reformer but who had changed his opinions and thereafter hounded those who dared to desire church change, this work states in part:

> . . . Let the one give over their worshipping of images, their adoring and offering supplication to Saints, their offensive ceremonies, their arbitrary indulgences, their using of a language not understood in their devotions; all which themselves will confess not to be necessary, to be orders of the church, and such as at pleasure she may dispense with . . . on the other side, let the Protestants, such at least-wise as think to purge out that negative and contradictory humour, of thinking they are then rightest when they are unlikest the Papacy; then nearest to God when farthest from Rome; let them look with the eye of Charity upon them as well as of severity, and they shall find in them some excellent orders for government, some singular helps for an increase of godliness and devotion, for the conquering of sin, for the perfecting of virtue, and contrariwise in themselves, looking with a more single and less indulgent eye than they do, they

> shall find that there is no such absolute or unreprovable perfection in their doctrine and reformation, as some dreamers in the pleasing view of their own actions do fancy . . . For all other questions it should be lawful for each man so to believe as he found cause; not condemning other with such peremptoriness as is the guise of some men of overweening conceits; and the handling of all controversies for their final compounding to be confined to the schools, to councils, and to the learned languages, which are the proper places to try them, and fittest tongues to treat them in.[1]

It probably did not come as a great surprise to Brewster when he heard from an informed traveler that Sandys' work had been ordered burned soon after it appeared in print as the Royal High Commission considered it to be inflammatory.[2] Such news only made him redouble his efforts to further Puritanism in his section of northern England, for when he had returned to Scrooby, he was a confirmed Puritan. The people, however, not having been educated in the reformed faith, did not always take kindly to any change from Romanism. Little by little, however, small groups began to meet at various churches or

[1]Hunter, pp. 156-160.

[2]William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, ed. William Davis (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p. 53.

houses in the neighborhood where they could hear the ideas of those ministers, such as Richard Clyfton of Babworth and John Smyth of Gainsborough, who had espoused the reformed theology.

William Brewster by 1593 was married and had a son Jonathan. Genuinely liked and respected by his neighbors for his geniality and intelligence, he was wise and discreet beyond his years due to his inherent nature and his years at Cambridge and at court. His association with Davison and his observation of many of the court favorites, among them many Puritans such as the Earl of Leicester, the poets Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney, and the great Lord Burghley, treasurer and practically the prime minister of England, had opened a new world to Brewster.[1] Now his position as bailiff of Scrooby manor and as postmaster of the Great North Road brought him into contact with news of the court and with what was happening in the outside world by means of informed travelers, oftentimes royal messengers or officials who would spend the night at Scrooby. So went the years during which Brewster and many of his neighbors would go to Babworth, a few miles distant, to listen to Reverend Richard Clyfton, a Puritan minister who was quite extreme in his views. By 1602 Brewster and those of his neighbors who thought as he did were holding religious meetings in the ancient manor house, although it

[1]Willison, p. 29.

was not until later that the group actually organized into a church. Grave danger attended such meetings as there were royal penalties exacted for the mere infraction of not attending one's own parish church; for the much more serious offense of holding and attending any kind of heretical meeting there were much sterner punishments.

One of those who walked several miles to hear Richard Clyfton at Babworth and who was greatly influenced by Brewster was William Bradford, the Pilgrims' historian and one of their most capable leaders in America. Son of a prosperous yeoman family, by the age of twelve he was an avid student of the Bible, and he deserted his parish church with its Romish Anglican ceremonies to join Brewster's group, even though such a move was perilous.

Another who undoubtedly was seeking answers to perplexing questions was Francis Cooke from the nearby village of Blyth. He, like Bradford, found some solutions for his religious uncertainties concerning this life and the next when the Scrooby postmaster became his mentor.

CHAPTER III

A BIBLE FOR EVERY ENGLISHMAN

Francis Cooke probably was born in the very old hamlet of Blyth sometime between 1577 and 1583 during the reign of Elizabeth I.[1] The village itself had evolved around a Benedictine priory established there in 1088, only twenty-two years after William the Conqueror had landed in England and had begun to exert Norman influence there. Through the centuries the Blyth priory church had been enlarged and changed, so that by 1400 it was divided into two sections with the parishioners worshipping in one half and the monks in the other. With the dissolution of the monasteries during 1536-39 the conventual buildings, including that part of the church belonging to the priory, were sold and pulled down so that the materials could be used elsewhere. By the time Francis was christened at Blyth, if he were baptized there rather than in a neighboring parish church, the eastern bay of the nave and the north aisle in the hall gardens were all that remained

[1]Willison, Saints and Strangers, p. 439. See also: Annie Arnoux Haxtun, Signers of the Mayflower Compact (New York: The Mail and Express, 1899), Part II, p. 3; The Mayflower Story (Plymouth, Mass.: General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1968), p. 19.

of the original church.[1]

The reliable sources concerning those who came on the Mayflower provide little or no information concerning Francis' early life. It has been speculated by at least one authority that his grandfather and his father may have been silk mercers, and that they may have had distinguished careers, respectively, as a member of an inner circle of the royal court and as an attorney.[2] The weight of circumstance and probability, however, would place Cooke, as in the case of Bradford, as the son of an English yeoman family. That he could read and write seems evident for he was the seventeenth signer of the Mayflower Compact. Literacy in those days was not a commonplace ability, for there were many wealthy men and peers of the realm who could not read nor write.[3] Francis probably was tutored privately, very possibly by some cleric who lived nearby and to whom the boy could go for lessons; or, as Brewster had done during his youth, Francis may have walked or gone on horseback to a neighboring village for some formal schooling. Even at an early age there must have been evidences of an inquisitive mind, discerning judgment, and the capability

[1]The Priory Church of St. Mary and St. Martin (Retford, England: Wharton Ltd., n.d.), pp. 1-2.

[2]Haxtun, op. cit., p. 3.

[3]Bradford Smith, Bradford of Plymouth (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1951), p. 36.

to demand his neighbors' respect and confidence, as these qualities are later evidenced by the following notation in Mourt's Relation, written by Bradford and Winslow, two of the foremost Pilgrims:

> Francis Cooke brought with him only his son John. His wife Esther and children Jacob, Jane, and Esther, followed in the Ann in 1623; in 1626 he had Mary. Winslow, in Hypocrisie Unmasked says that 'the wife of Francis Cooke, being a Walloon, holds communion at Plymouth as she came from the French to this day, by vertue of communion of churches.' He was taxed 18 s., 5 March-4 April, 1633; only 9 s. the following year; 1-10 Oct., 1634, was appointed one of the layers-out of highways for Plymouth; is in the list of freemen 7-17 March, 1636-37; 2-12 May, 1627, was one of a jury 'to set forth the heigh wayes;' 2-12 Jan. 1637-38 was on a jury for trial of Edward Shaw and Mark Mendlove for 'felony' of 15 s. from Wm. Corvannell; often served on juries, committees, and the 'Grand Inquest;' was called by Bradford in 1650, 'a very olde man, and hath seene his childrens children have children;' was one of the first purchasers of Dartmouth, 1652, and Middleborough, 1662; died 7-17 April, 1663.

> His wife survived him.[1]
>
> . . . 28 Dec./7 Jan'y, 1620/1, the Pilgrims divided themselves into nineteen families in order to reduce the number of houses to be built, and cast lots for locations. Francis Cooke's plot was on the south side of the street, with Isaac Allerton and Edward Winslow on the east and west.[2]
>
> He was one of the 'Purchasers' who in 1627 bought all the rights of the 'Adventurers,' . . .[3]

During his years as bailiff and postmaster, 1590-1607, Brewster's home at Scrooby manor became a nucleus for the dissemination of learning and for the intelligent perusal of both early and contemporary English and continental religious literature that would help to enlighten those who were seeking God's truth. Both contemplative and lively discussions flourished among those who could read and those who could not but who were willing to listen to the reading of the printed page. Books had become more plentiful after the middle of the fifteenth century with the introduction of printing, and almost everyone had a copy of the Bible if no other book.

[1]William Bradford and Edward Winslow, Mourt's Relation, ed. Henry M. Dexter (New York: Garrett Press, 1969), p. 80.

[2]Hubert Kinney Shaw (comp.), Families of the Pilgrims--Francis Cooke (Boston: Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1955), p. 6.

[3]Ibid.

That Scrooby had earned such a position among the neighboring villages was due to its propitious location for the care and comfort of generally well-informed travelers along the Great North Road, as well as to the active and keen mind of university-trained Brewster. He could provide much excellent, if sometimes inflammatory, reading material to those who could and would read it, among whom Francis probably was one of the most interested. Brewster's library contained for his time books which showed his tastes to be those of quite a literary man of the world as well as those of a Puritan. Among his volumes were Camden's Brittain, Machiavelli's Princeps, books on silkworms and medicine, the works of Aristotle, Erasmus, More, Dekker, Luther, Calvin, Peter the Martyr, and Beza, some of the early works of Raleigh and Francis Bacon, the psalms of David in metre, as well as many theological treatises written at Cambridge including A Brief Discoverie of the False Church by Barrow.[1] Very possibly he also possessed copies of John Foxe's Book of Martyrs, the Book of Common Prayer, the Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius, William Whittingham's Brieff Discourse of the Troubles begonne at Franckford, and other philosophical, historical, and theological works. Most importantly, he had a copy of the Geneva Bible which was the Bible of the Scrooby

[1]Dorothy Brewster, William Brewster of the Mayflower New York: New York University Press, 1971), p. 105.

group as they formed the Separatist church and which they carried to America with them.

During Elizabeth's reign translations of the complete Bible had become plentiful and cheap. This was a complete change from a century before, as there had been no English translation of the complete New Testament until 1526 and none of the complete Bible until 1535. The medieval church had used the Holy Book's Latin version, now generally termed the Vulgate. Until almost the sixteenth century the Synod of Oxford had forbidden an English translation of the Bible, and no translation of it in any language could be read unless such had been approved. This resistance on the part of the Church of England to an English translation of the Bible was due to political, linguistic, and religious reasons. The Church argued that misunderstanding might result from a faulty translation; from such misunderstanding wrong beliefs might result which would imperil one's soul. Such wrong beliefs also could endanger the position of the prelates and even the position of the monarch. It was simply a case wherein those in authority did not care to believe that the ordinary man could and would understand the Bible as the officials wished.[1]

Among early translators of the Bible into English was

[1]Craig R. Thompson, The Bible in English 1525-1611 (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1968), pp. 1-3.

John Wycliffe, a fourteenth-century Oxford reformer who encouraged men to read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves by means of his translation. He reasoned that men should accept the ultimate authority of the Holy Book, but in order to do so they had to be able to read it in their own language.[1] Another early English Biblical translator was William Tyndale who, in the early years of the sixteenth century, had been denied permission by the Bishop of London to translate the New Testament from Greek to English, and who had gone to Germany to do so. He utilized Erasmus' Greek text, Luther's German version, and the Vulgate. Before completing his work which was to exert enduring influence on the language of the English Bible, Tyndale was burned at the stake as an arch-heretic in 1536 by the Emperor Charles V.[2]

Although royal injunctions up to 1530 had forbidden the buying or the keeping of an English Bible, a complete work in English had been given royal sanction by 1535, as Henry VIII had become the head of the Church of England and had changed his ideas concerning an English version. Miles Coverdale translated the earliest printed version of all but one of the last fourteen books of the Old Testament and provided the earliest English version of the Apocrypha.

[1]Ibid., p. 2.

[2]Robert Shafer, et al., eds., From Beowulf to Thomas Hardy (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1939), pp. 269-70.

Matthew's Bible in 1537 was a combination of the work of Coverdale and Tyndale, for the name of the translator, Thomas Matthew, was undoubtedly a pseudonym for a companion of Tyndale. The Great Bible, sometimes called "Cromwell's" or "Cranmer's," was an extensive revision of the Matthew's Bible. Cromwell and Cranmer were King Henry VIII's chief administrators at the time of publication, and they ordered that every parish church should have a copy. Servants, laborers, and housewives were forbidden to read it in private in 1542-43; but by 1547-53, during Edward VI's reign, Bibles were freely printed and circulated. This procedure was halted during Mary Tudor's five years as queen, but on the accession of Elizabeth to the throne, the Great Bible was put back in the churches and translation and printing of the Bible was continued.[1]

The Geneva Bible, the work of a band of English Protestant exiles in Switzerland during Mary Tudor's reign, was first published in 1560 and was chiefly the work of William Whittingham. It was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, who had succeeded her sister by that time, by her "humble subjects of the English Church at Geneva." The Greek text as well as Latin, French, and English versions were used for the New Testament, while the Old Testament was a revision of the Great Bible based on a new comparison of the Hebrew.

[1]Thompson, op. cit., pp. 7-10.

It was instantly popular with all classes of English readers due to the division of the text into verses as well as into chapters, to the extensive commentary and explanation provided in the marginal notes, and to the roman and italic type which replaced black letter type. Especially favored by the Puritans due to its connections with Calvin, the French Protestant religious leader at Geneva, the Geneva Bible was never royally authorized for public use.[1] It became the household Bible of almost every English family and, most certainly, of the Separatists at Scrooby. It was known as the "Breeches Bible" as its translation of Genesis 3:7 concerning Adam and Eve states: "Then the eyes of them both were opened and they knew they were naked, and they sewed figge-tree leaves together and made themselves breeches." The later scholars who produced the King James version wrote: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." Thus "breeches" became "aprons," and most of the subsequent revisions have kept the latter word.[2]

The Bishops' Bible, published in 1568, was a reworking of the Great Bible with some translation borrowed from the Geneva version and was used officially during Elizabeth's reign. In 1604, after he had become King of England, James I

[1]Thompson, pp. 10-11.

[2]Mayflower Quarterly, Vol. 30, No. 3 (August, 1965), p. 18.

agreed to the proposal made during the Hampton Court Conference that there be a new translation of the Bible, as he was extremely happy to do all he could to abolish the popular Geneva Bible of the Puritans. The new version was to be a revision not a new translation, and it was to follow the Bishops' Bible with alterations where they were necessary while using the Tyndale, Coverdale, and Geneva versions when they were superior to the Bishops' Bible. Thus the King James version of 1611 resulted in a supremacy of linguistic style, if not of scholarly work.[1]

For dignity and reverence the language of the King James version is quite appropriately ornate, as evidenced in the Epistle Dedicatory written to honor King James, but also to attack in a subtle measure those who were not of his religious thinking:

> . . . So that if, on the one side, we shall be traduced by Popish Persons at home or abroad, who therefore will malign us, because we are poor instruments to make God's holy Truth to be yet more and more known unto the people, whom they desire still to keep in ignorance and darkness; or if, on the other side, we shall be maligned by self-conceited Brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing, but what is framed by

[1]Thompson, pp. 11-16.

> themselves, and hammered on their anvil; we may rest secure, supported within by the truth and innocency of a good conscience, having walked the ways of simplicity and integrity, as before the Lord; and sustained without by the powerful protection of Your Majesty's grace and favour, which will ever give countenance to honest and christian endeavours against bitter censures and uncharitable imputations.

Much of the language of the King James version is that of Tyndale although his version used many more colloquialisms and maintained an idiomatic use of the language. In Tyndale's translation Eve, for example, is told by the serpent, "Tush, ye shall not die"; when the Lord was with Joseph, "he was a lucky fellow"; and St. Paul leaves "after the Easter holidays."[1] The similarity of language in Tyndale's translation and the King James version is shown, however, by the following passage from Luke 15:1-7:[2]

TYNDALE

> Then resorted unto him all the publicans and sinners, for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying: He receiveth to his company sinners, and eateth with them. Then put he

[1]Ibid., p. 7.

[2]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

forth this similitude to them, saying: What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, until he find him? And when he hath found him, he putteth him on his shoulders with joy: and as soon as he cometh home, he calleth together his lovers and neighbors, saying unto them: Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

KING JAMES

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners, for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying: this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying: What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep

> which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

In his translation Tyndale's use of the words seniors or elders instead of priests, congregation instead of church, and love instead of charity was attacked in a pamphleteering controversy by Sir Thomas More as being unorthodox. Tyndale realized that the implications of religious terms within his translation were of the utmost importance. He did not use the terms with their established connotation as they pertained to a theology that he opposed; yet he did not mistranslate willfully.[1] More questioned Tyndale concerning how men were to interpret the Scriptures correctly if the Church did not do it for them in established terms. To this Tyndale replied:

> Who taught the eagles to spy out their prey? Even so the children of God spy out their Father; and Christ's elect spy out their Lord, and trace out the paths of His feet and follow. . . . Hereby ye see that it is a plain and an evident conclusion, as bright as the sun's shining, that the truth of God's word dependeth not of the truth of the congregation. And therefore, when thou art asked, why thou believest that thou shalt be saved

[1]Thompson, p. 7.

> through Christ, and of such like principles of our faith; answer, Thou wottest and feelest that it is true. And when he asketh, how thou knowest that it is true; answer, Because it is written in thine heart. And if he ask who wrote it; answer, The Spirit of God. And if he ask how thou camest first by it; tell him whether by reading in books, or hearing it preached, as by an outward instrument, but that inwardly thou wast taught by the Spirit of God. And if he ask, whether thou believest it not because it is written in books, or because the priests so preach; answer, No, not now, but only because it is written in thine heart, and because the Spirit of God so preacheth and so testifieth unto thy soul.[1]

Thus Tyndale believed in the absolute right of the individual to interpret the truth of the Bible for himself. This theory of private inspiration, of course, can and, during the Reformation, did lead to almost total anarchy. Tyndale's position as one of the precursors of the English Reformation is irrefutable.

All this was brought to the attention of Francis Cooke by Brewster, always a scholarly man who delighted in the enjoyment he could gather and disseminate from books. For

[1]Shafer, op. cit., p. 290.

Francis the association with Brewster must have been one of pure pleasure and mental exercise. By the time the two knew each other well, Brewster had married and had a family, but he grew to like immensely this much younger man who was searching for the religious direction that was right for him. Cooke's family may have been Romanist, or his grandparents may have been of the Catholic faith while his parents may have become Protestants. Francis, whatever his religious background and whatever it might mean to him in familial relationships, was on the way to becoming a Separatist, brought to that ultimate decision by Brewster's leadership in intellectual and religious matters, by the theological doctrines expounded by Richard Clyfton and John Robinson, and by his own personal convictions.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY QUESTIONING

As Brewster continued to open new doors of learning to him through discussion and by guiding his reading to a certain extent, Francis Cooke began to realize that during the Elizabethan and early Jacobean eras during which he lived in England, even extending back to the very beginning of English literature, religion and literature were almost inseparable. He saw that Christianity in England continuously had affected, in one way or another, the outlook of writers and the character of their writings. This, he discovered, was true not only of England but had proved to be the same for all the Christian world. He understood that all men were in search of the Supreme Authority which should be the same for all men; but he knew, also, that those whom he respected and to whom he felt drawn gave their assent to a supreme authority that bore no relationship to the divineness of popes or to the divine right of monarchs, the latter a tenet staunchly upheld by King James.

As Brewster was very busy with his duties as bailiff, postmaster, operator of an inn and tavern at the manor, and family man, and as Francis was occupied with his duties as the son of a yeoman family, many of the discussions between

the two probably were held in the manor tavern after everyone else had retired. Francis would have read and pondered some piece of literary work until his own ideas crystallized concerning the philosophy it imparted; sometimes he would stir up a discussion concerning it among his family members or at the Angel Inn at Blyth where generations of his fellow villagers had met and conversed over their tankards since 1274. The tunnel built during the time of Henry VIII in the cellar of the Angel Inn, leading from there to the priory some two hundred yards away, was always the subject of much interest and speculation on the part of those enjoying a round of ale and conversation. Of course one could only conjecture as to the tunnel's past usage, but if all the stories told to Thomas Cromwell, King Henry's vicar-general, by royal agents were true concerning the scandalous going-on within the old abbeys and monasteries, Henry actually would have had sufficient cause for the dissolution of the monasteries, and the tunnel would have had a fascinating history. As much of what was told him was pure fabrication, however, Henry's prime interest was to obtain more land, hence more finances, for this government.[1] This was well understood by the villagers of Blyth, some of whom were still Catholics, and most of whom, no matter what religion they embraced--

[1]G. W. O. Woodward, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (London: Pitkin Pictorials Ltd., 1972), pp. 14-19.

Catholicism, Anglicanism, or some form of Puritanism--had had some kind of religious conflict within their family with an English monarch. All this made for careful, if not at times secretive, but highly interesting conversation in which Francis must have participated to a great extent.

Hearing and quietly joining the spoken thoughts of these common people of the land helped to provide Francis with the moral fortitude he would need in order to break away from all he had known. Although he was not blind to the corruption, abuses, and discontentments of his time, he never considered armed rebellion against those who perpetrated these wrongs for he felt that such rebellion, while certainly a sign of spiritual independence, was not necessarily proof of it. His would be a rebellion of the spirit.

In his conversations at Scrooby with Brewster, Francis often encountered a contemplative mind, although Brewster was a man of action as well as one of philosophy. Brewster encouraged his young friend to go to Babworth, a village a few miles southeast of Blyth, to hear Richard Clyfton read and preach. Clyfton, who had been the rector at Babworth since 1586 and who for some years had been the only Puritan rector in the district, had converted many to his more extreme form of Puritanism. Bradford writes of him: ". . . Mr. Richard Clifton, a grave & revered preacher, who by his paines and dilligens had done much good, and under God had ben a

means of the conversion of many."[1] Clyfton was to become the pastor of the Separatist church which later began to meet in the manor house at Scrooby.

While he was rector at Babworth, Clyfton recognized Francis' preoccupation with religious conflicts stemming from a traditionally conservative background. The Babworth pastor helped Brewster in his attempt to provide Francis with an understanding of the past experience and knowledge of those who had fought the same spiritual battle as Francis. Clyfton, who had studied at Cambridge, often would base his sermons on the works of early and contemporary reformers, even referring many times to Catholic reformers who had desired to abolish the abuses within their religion but not the doctrine. Clyfton could read Latin and would translate works in that language for those who came to hear him, for Clyfton was a scholarly reformer.

In this manner Clyfton introduced Petrarch, the fourteenth century Italian poet and scholar, and Savonarola, the fifteenth century Italian reformer, to his parishioners at Babworth. Clyfton explained that Petrarch had written, among many other works, the Epistolae sine nomine or Nameless Letters, a series of nineteen letters concerning the abuses in the papal court at Avignon in France. In Letter 14 Petrarch tells

[1]Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, ed. Harvey Wish, p. 27.

of an observed incident concerning two high clerics who were stopped by petitioners as they were leaving the palace. One cleric answered the people's requests elaborately, falsely, and cruelly and was asked by the other if he were not ashamed to mock the poor people. The first replied: "You ought to be ashamed of being so slow-witted that you haven't learned the arts of the Curia." This incident had shocked Petrarch, but others laughed and thought the false one quite clever.[1] Here Clyfton might interject a lecture on deceit.

Petrarch recalls another instance in which John XXII had sent his armies to destroy Milan. A cardinal, said to be John's son, was in charge and was like the Pope in appearance and savagery. The cardinal came as a predator, not as an apostle; as Hannibal, not as Peter. God defeated him, however. Petrarch's Letter 17 continues:

> One of his aides I knew, and hated, young though I was. He brought news to the Pope that his armies were repulsed before the city, and said: 'I know you desire nothing more than the ruin of Italy, and are spending the church's wealth to bring it about. We are halted by Milan's defense. There is a better way--take the papacy and the empire and transfer them to Cahors in Gascony, our homeland. With a

[1]Morris Bishop, Petrarch and His World (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1963), pp. 311-312.

> word you will triumph over your enemies.' The Pope replied: 'You fool! In that way the Popes would become mere Bishops of Avignon and the Emperor become Prefect of Gascony, while whoever rules Rome would be Pope and Emperor. You would only exalt the name of Italy, whereas our purpose must be to keep Italy from claiming its due.'[1]

Clyfton emphasized that Petrarch's purpose was the reform of the Church's conduct from within as the Italian had made no criticism of doctrine or of the priesthood in general. Petrarch actually attempted to reconcile and blend Christian and Pagan, or the Greek and the Roman, traditions. He discovered that there remained an undeniable opposition between pagan and Christian concepts, however, for to the Greeks and Romans human life was significant and worthy in and for itself; they had studied to obtain the most from life by developing, refining, and exercising all human capacities to the utmost; they had believed in the dignity and greatness of human nature and in the possibility of a satisfying happiness in this life, regardless of any life to come. The Christian, on the other hand, regarded this life as only a means to an end beyond itself. Petrarch never had any doubts concerning his faith, but he longed for a fame that would persist after his death. In St. Augustine's writings he especially found

[1]Bishop, op. cit., p. 312.

the logic of the otherworldly faith which he fully accepted. If, however, man's soul were to live eternally after death in Heaven or Hell, and if every man deserved eternal punishment, but some by God's grace and a personal consecration to piety and righteousness might escape that punishment, then it would seem to follow that man should detach himself from every earthly appeal which would distract him from his goal of eternal life. Petrarch could not bring these views into complete harmony, but he attempted to make the best of both worlds. When he declared: "I am like a man standing between two worlds; I look both forward and backward," he was rebelling against his time, not his religion.[1]

Clyfton also mentioned Savonarola, a fifteenth-century Italian ecclesiastical reformer who sought church and state reforms, but who never attacked Catholic dogma nor advocated a new system of religious doctrine. Savonarola's writings, including theological works, a treatise on government, and numerous sermons, long had interested Clyfton because the Italian was concerned with irregularities of the city of Florence, with those of the Roman court, and with those of the clergy. Clyfton recalled that Savonarola had encouraged the invasion of Italy by France's Charles VIII and had written a letter to the French king in which he demonstrated his belief in the divine right of kings but still admonished Charles to

[1]Bishop, p. 374.

proceed righteously. The letter reads:

> Behold that which I had predicted to you, namely, the rebellion of your people, and the powerful opposition you are encountering from your adversaries. Believe not that you will be rescued by your own power, but solely by the mercy of God, through the prayers we have offered up for the protection of your crown. I will, on the part of God, again declare unto you, that if you will not believe, and will not keep faith with the Florentines, by restoring their property and curbing the evil and perverse deeds of your servants, greater tribulation than ever will come upon you. And if you will continue obstinate, and will not humble yourself, I declare unto you, on the part of God, that He will revoke your election to that office for which He chose you as his minister, and will appoint another. But if you have faith, and will keep faith with the Florentines, by surrendering their property and doing them honour, in the way that I have on other occasions written to your most Christian Majesty; and if you and yours will rightly conduct yourselves, chastising the wicked, and preferring the good, God will again give you victory, and the whole world will not be able to resist you, and He will confer upon you whatever kingdom and

empire you may desire.[1]

Condemning the vices of the clergy Savonarola exclaimed:

> When I think of the life of priests, I cannot refrain from tears. O, my brethren, my sons, I pray you to weep over those evils in the church, that the Lord may call the priests to repentance; for you must see that a great scourge is hanging over them. It is the clergy who are the maintainers of all sorts of wickedness. Begin with Rome; there they make a mockery of Christ and the saints; they are worse than the Turks, than the Moors. Not only are they unwilling to suffer for the sake of God, but they even make a traffic of the sacraments. At this very day benefices are put up to sale, and given to the highest bidder. . .[2]

It was from Savonarola's Sermons on Exodus that Clyfton particularly liked to quote, oftentimes subtly leading his congregation to believe that he would substitute the word monarch for pope in this passage:

> If it were true that a Pope could do no wrong, should we not then follow his example, and so be saved? You will perhaps say, that in so far as he

[1]Pasquale Villari, The History of Girolamo Savonarola and of His Times (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1863), p. 386.

[2]Ibid., p. 236.

> is a man, a Pope may do wrong, but not as Pope; and I say in reply, that the Pope may err in his judgments and sentences. Go read the many constitutions that one Pope has made and another has violated, and the multitude of opinions held by some Popes, the contrary of which have been held by other Popes.[1]

While some Protestants might have claimed Petrarch and Savonarola as brothers, Clyfton felt that neither would have been sympathetic to the Puritan cause; as Savonarola believed that man's perfect state did not depend upon faith nor laws, but upon charity, and only he who had that within him knew what was necessary for salvation. This concept would be completely opposed to the Reformation's fundamental doctrine of justification by faith alone.[2] Petrarch was no rebel against his Church's doctrines, only against its abuses. He was searching for renewal and rebirth, and due to his demand for these, he became the father of the Renaissance but not of the Reformation. Clyfton did not hesitate to point out to his listeners, among whom was Francis Cooke, how important both men were, however, in the evolution of the concept of church reform.

Clyfton also brought to the people's attention the work

[1]Villari, Savonarola, p. 237.

[2]Ibid., p. 234.

of another Italian--Machiavelli's The Prince. Writing in the early sixteenth century, Machiavelli recorded many of the precepts of war, conquest, government, and statesmanship which he made applicable to the maintenance and unification of his native Italy. His name had become through the rest of the century a synonym for all that was diabolical in public and private policy, although he particularly dwelt most realistically on the ruthlessness necessary for a monarch. He named Ferdinand of Aragon as the foremost king in Christendom as he practiced "pious cruelty"; this simply meant that Ferdinand engaged in any kind of undertaking covering himself with the cloak of religion. Such a prince possessed the fierceness of the lion and the craft of the fox, and he changed with the vicissitudes of Fortune so that he would go on prospering, for God would not do everything Himself. If He did, man would be deprived of his free will and such share of glory as belonged to him. A prince, according to Machiavelli, dared not be honest in all his actions for it was a dishonest world and, by being scrupulous, he would go down to certain ruin. He had to give the appearance of honesty, however, for the world cared for appearances, if not for actualities. A prince was not able to possess all those qualities for which other men were known as good men; for the maintenance of his state he was to do anything that might be contrary

to his faith, religion, or humanity.[1] Machiavelli had derived these precepts from his own observations and from historical experience; but Clyfton's group of unsophisticated English midland folk could very readily relate Machiavelli's monarch to one or more in England within the scope of their memory.

One Sunday after the regular church service Reverend Clyfton, who, as well as Brewster, had come into the possession of many theological works on church reform, showed Francis copies of some of the writings of John Wycliffe, the fourteenth-century English reformer who had been one of the first translators of the Bible into English. Wycliffe, educated at Oxford, later elected master of Balliol College there, doctor of theology and teacher of divinity, had always held esteemed positions as well as always laboring tirelessly as a pastor. About the same time as he had begun a translation of the New Testament into the common tongue, he had condemned monasticism, rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and had declared that sinfulness disqualified clerics from performing their functions. He was proclaimed a heretic, his works were condemned to be burned, some of his followers called Lollards were imprisoned, but he was freed. He, of the same bent of mind as Tyndale who was to follow him,

[1]Niccolo Machiavelli, "The Prince," The Harvard Classics, ed. Charles W. Eliot, Vol. 36 (New York: Collier Press, 1910), pp. 68, 75, 86, 88.

believed that the doing of good works of one's own choosing did not necessarily place one in a state of divine grace which was the cause of salvation. As the elect formed the church catholic, this could not be identified with the Roman hierarchy headed by the pope. No one could join that holy church by choice merely by being a member of the church militant, nor could any earthly power deprive the predestined or the elect from his membership. The latter could only take place if the individual committed mortal sin. Thus Wycliffe made the distinction that one could be in the church, but not of the church. No one actually knew if he were among the elect, but he had to follow a life of Christian piety; and one could not pass judgment as to who did or did not belong to the true church. While the pious life, according to Wycliffe, was generally the visible sign of election to eternal life, it was not conclusive, for the elect might have lived for a time in sin. Only Christ was the supreme head of the universally predestined, not the pope nor any hierarchy.[1]

Clyfton read aloud to Francis a small passage from one of Wycliffe's writings: "When men speak of the holy church, they understand thereby prelates, priests, and monks, canons, and friars, and all men that have crowns (tonsure), though they live ever so cursedly contrary to God's law."[2]

[1]Matthew Spinka, John Hus' Concept of the Church (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 24-26.

[2]Ibid., p. 26.

The Babworth rector then went on to explain to Francis that in two of Wycliffe's major works, De dominio divino of 1375 and De civili dominio of 1376, he developed the spiritual concept that the relationship of God and man was that of lord and vassal, hence, a relationship simulating the medieval feudal system. All was conditioned upon grace, and Wycliffe applied this principle to civil and ecclesiastical rulers who, if they sinned, were not in a state of grace and who lost the right of authority as their power came directly from God. It did not necessarily follow that they no longer would govern, but they did so de facto and not de jure divino. Although they might be unfaithful vassals to their own lord, they thus held securely over others their lordship which was based on human constitutions, not divine dominion.[1]

Proceeding from Wycliffe's ideas on reform, Clyfton pointed out to Francis the philosophical bond between Wycliffe and John Hus, the Czech reformer of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Like Wycliffe, Hus was a theologian and divided his time between the pulpit and a position at the University of Prague. By 1402, however, he was the leader of the Czech reform, had separated himself from the regular clergy, and had incorporated into his thinking many of Wycliffe's tenets. His most important work of the reform movement was De Ecclesia in which he wrote: "Let the disciples

[1]Spinka, p. 31.

of Antichrist blush, who, living contrary to Christ, speak of themselves as the greatest and proudest of God's holy church. They, polluted by avarice and arrogance of the world, are called publicly the heads and body of the holy church. According to Christ's gospel, however, they are called the least."[1]

Hus did not reject entirely the offices of pope and cardinals, as Wycliffe did, but he believed that if popes, bishops, and priests served the church devotedly, they should be honored as spiritual fathers above the natural fathers. But "those who do not live saintly lives wrongly call themselves saints."[2]

Hus continued his admonition in this manner:

> Well, you apostolic vicars! see whether you have the Holy Spirit, which is the spirit of unity, peace, and grace. For then you would live as the apostles did. However, because you quarrel about dignity on account of possessions, murder people and cause contention in Christiandom, you show by your deeds that you possess an evil spirit, the spirit of discord and avarice which has been a killer or murderer from the beginning.[3]

[1]Spinka, p. 261.

[2]Ibid., pp. 294-295.

[3]Ibid., p. 296.

While Clyfton could read Latin but not Czech, he told Francis of passages of which he had heard from Hus' Postilla, a collection of Czech sermons in which Hus denounced the pomp and ostentation of the pope and cardinals and the people's adulation of the papal hierarchy: "As I also had regarded it as right before I knew Scripture and the life of my Savior well. But now He has granted me to know that his is a veritable blasphemy of Christ and repudiation of His Word and the following of Him; as such it is truly antichristian."[1] Hus complained that the people gaped:

> at the pictures, the vestments, chalices and other marvelous furnishings of the churches. Their ears are filled with the sound of bells, organs, and small bells, by frivolous singing which incites to dance rather than to piety. The minds of the people are filled with observing how irreverently the priests pray, walking, talking and laughing in the church. They are clad in sumptous robes, hoods, caps with pearl knots, silk tassels, as well as capes variously ornamented; they carry crosiers, staffs and silver crosses, ampullas and gilded sprinklers. Thus a simple man wastes his whole time in church and returning home, talks about it the whole day while he says not a word about God.[2]

[1]Spinka, p. 297. [2]Ibid., p. 306.

Again in the Postilla Hus remonstrated against those who preach:

> that priests are gods, God's creators, and that they have the power both to save or condemn whomever they want; that no one can be saved without them; that no one ought to punish them; and that they should eat, drink, and wear nothing but the best--he who preaches thus is a reverend preacher and should preach; but whoever preaches that priests should not commit adultery, rob people by avarice and simony, leave other men's wives alone, and be content with one benefice . . . him they immediately dub a slanderer of the holy priesthood, a destroyer of the holy church, and a heretic who should not be allowed to preach.[1]

Hus insisted on the right of private understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures, he rejected any function of the priests except those which were purely ministerial, and he stressed the one church indivisible consisting of the predestined alone, rather than consisting of all baptized believers. Hus' heresy, for which he was burned at the stake in 1415, was essentially his concept of the catholicity of all who were one in Christ, a catholicity in which the Catholic church shared, but which it did not totally

[1]Spinka, p. 304.

constitute.

Deeply devoted to the truth, Hus in his Sermones in Bethlehem exhorted his followers and all those who would be true Christians: "Therefore, faithful Christian, seek the truth, hear the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, speak the truth, adhere to the truth, defend the truth to death; for truth will make you free from sin, the devil, the death of the soul, and finally from eternal death."[1]

As he listened to and conversed with Brewster and Reverend Clyfton, Francis Cooke began to realize more fully than ever before how many individuals throughout Christendom had endured spiritual and physical agony, even martyrdom or death without martyrdom, because of their ideas concerning church reform or because they had advocated new philosophies of religion that might alter men's minds from the established form. He understood more completely the pattern of reform and persecution throughout several centuries, and he recognized that the seeds of reformation had not been planted only during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in his native England.

[1]Spinka, p. 320.

CHAPTER V

THE PRAISE OF HUMANISM

Francis Cooke, as a member of the citizenry of the English midlands during the later Elizabethan and early Jacobean eras, could not fully appreciate the fact that the spiritual awakening and searching that was occurring within him and within hundreds like him all over Europe was, paradoxically, both a herald and an echo of changes that were to lead that continent from feudalism to the threshold of the modern world.

In 1500, at least seventy-five years before Francis was born, England was still essentially medieval as the areas of one's loyalty were as yet small and numerous, with the feudal manor or castle or the village or town the hub of the fief's existence. Actually England was quite backward in her artistic, intellectual, and spiritual development, as she was almost the last country in Europe to be affected by innovative movements that were already emerging in Italy in the fourteenth century. The winds of change were blowing, however, although slowly. Two strong moves in England to subordinate the supremacy of the Catholic Church ruled by the Pope at Rome were now evident. The king forbade the withdrawal of land from civil taxation by the heretofore common practice of

deeding it to the Church, and he also revoked the right of English subjects to appeal to Rome from English civil courts.[1]

Similar happenings were taking place in other areas in Europe, illustrating that the emergence of national feeling and power was reacting against the supreme authority of the Church. In France there was abolished the papal right of taxation, and the death penalty was provided for those who might bring into the country a papal bull reinstating this right. German princes and cities, while lacking a central government but possessing a national consciousness, demanded from Rome's papacy the same powers as those possessed by kings. So papal claims of unlimited authority were being challenged by national and secular rulers even before the Reformation as nationalistic thought evolved.[2]

The rise of nationalism throughout most of Europe was due to many factors: the invention of printing and the subsequent dissemination of books in the vernacular had stabilized language to a degree and hence communication had become much easier; many wars including the Crusades had exceeded the limits of feudal struggles and had united men from diverse backgrounds and groups, and the common people were ready for

[1]Eugene G. Bewkes, A Survey in Philosophy and Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940), p. 463.

[2]Ibid., p. 463.

a strong central government after generations of these wars; the necessity for unification in order to repel a foreign power often became evident; the growth of commerce with its attendant merchant class replaced with money the exchange of goods and services, and this merchant class united with the king to constrain the power of the nobles and to lessen the authority of the Church. Europe's horizons also had greatly expanded with the establishment of new trade routes to the East and the discovery of new lands in the New World, and as the merchants who dealt in goods and money prospered, so flourished capitalism which grew hand in hand with nationalism.[1]

With the breakdown of medieval isolation and with the emergence of a new wealthy and leisured class, there came into existence in Europe complex administrative and financial institutions and bodies that could provide a more settled, reasonably prosperous domestic environment in which new ideas and advancements might be brought to fruition. One of the most brilliant scientific achievements of any age was accomplished in 1543 when Nicholas Copernicus published his work, On the Revolution of the Celestial Orbs. In his book Copernicus denied the prevailing Ptolemaic theory that the universe was earth-centered and expounded his theory of a universe in which the earth rotates on its axis and revolves with

[1]Bewkes, pp. 461-62.

the other planets around the sun. This theory naturally assigned to the earth a much less important place in the whole scheme of things. It basically challenged the idea that the universe was created for man, thus threatening man's supreme position among created things at the very time when the New World, new learning, and new wealth had combined to provide man with a great sense of importance in himself. Thus the Copernican system meant a supreme revolution in thought for it challenged the fundamental, established conceptions of the structure of the universe. It also provided the basis of modern astronomy.

Copernicus, although he was a scientific heretic shaking traditional beliefs, did not hesitate to dedicate his work to Pope Paul III, supreme authority of one of the world's greatest establishments of the age. Copernicus wrote:

> I can easily conceive, most Holy Father, that as soon as some people learn that in this book which I have written concerning the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, I ascribe certain motions to the Earth, they will cry out at once that I and my theory should be rejected. For I am not so much in love with my conclusions as not to weigh what others will think about them, and although I know that the meditations of a philosopher are far removed from the judgment of the laity, because his endeavor is to seek out the truth in all things,

so far as this is permitted by God to the human reason, I still believe that one must avoid theories altogether foreign to orthodoxy. Accordingly, when I considered in my own mind how absurd a performance it must seem to those who know that the judgment of many centuries has approved the view that the Earth remains fixed as center in the midst of the heavens, if I should, on the contrary, assert that the Earth moves; I was for a long time at a loss to know whether I should publish the commentaries which I have written in proof of this motion, or whether it were not better to follow the example of the Pythagoreans and of some others, who were accustomed to transmit the secrets of Philosophy not in writing but orally, and only to their relatives and friends, as the letter from Lysis to Hipparchus bears witness. They did this, it seems to me, not as some think, because of a certain selfish reluctance to give their views to the world, but in order that the noblest truths, worked out by the careful study of great men, should not be despised by those who are vexed at the idea of taking great pains with any forms of literature except such as would be profitable, or by those who, if they are driven to the study of Philosophy for its own sake by the admonitions and the example

> of others, nevertheless, on account of their stupidity, hold a place among philosophers similar to that of drones among bees. Therefore, when I considered this carefully, the contempt which I had to fear because of the novelty and apparent absurdity of my view, nearly induced me to abandon utterly the work I had begun.
>
> .....
>
> In order, however, that both the learned and the unlearned equally may see that I do not avoid anyone's judgment, I have preferred to dedicate these lucubrations of mine to Your Holiness rather than to any other, because, even in this remote corner of the world where I live, you are considered to be the most eminent man in dignity of rank and in love of all learning and even of mathematics, so that by your authority and judgment you can easily suppress the bites of slanderers, albeit the proverb hath it that there is no remedy for the bite of a sycophant.[1]

Accompanying such new interests in science and in the physical world along with the rapidly expanding secular economy was a change in the manner in which man himself was

[1]Nicolaus Copernicus, "Dedication of the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies," The Harvard Classics (New York: The Collier Press, 1910), Vol. 39, pp. 55-59.

regarded. He was considered less as a member of a religious, social, or political order as he had been during the Middle Ages, and he became esteemed more as an individual who differed in character and opportunity from any other individual. The average man began to have a rejuvenated sense of the importance of his life on earth. Originating in Italy during the second half of the fourteenth century and from there spreading westward, this new concept of man which became known as "humanism" stressed the importance of learning how to live rather than how to die. Such knowledge, the humanists believed, could be obtained by liberating the inherent potentialities of human nature. The most excellent guides for mature and cultivated humanity were the ancients who had assiduously developed their humanity without benefit of divine revelation. It was quite apparent to men such as Petrarch, Castiglione, Erasmus, More, Colet, and a host of other great thinkers, that the study of classical literature illustrated that the cultivation of humanity was as well worth attention and effort as the study of divinity.

From sermons he heard at Babworth and his continued discussions with William Brewster and Reverend Clyfton, Francis Cooke had come to realize that the object of Petrarch's philosophy was a view of life by which the lives of common men, such as Francis himself and his fellow villagers, could be enriched and ennobled. John Colet, Desiderius Erasmus, and Sir Thomas More might well have been discussed at the Angel

Inn in Blyth as these men had lived during the early sixteenth century, probably within the scope of memory of family members of some of those who frequented the Inn.

Even among English midlanders the name of John Colet was well-known, as this scholarly man had been Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. He had attended Oxford, had studied in France and Italy, and later had given lectures at Oxford on the Epistles of St. Paul in which he used the humanists' historical approach rather than the accepted scholarly interpretation. In 1512 he re-established St. Paul's School for boys which was the first secondary school in England to adopt a classical curriculum with all studies based on Latin and with great emphasis on the teaching of Latin and Greek culture within a Christian atmosphere. This curriculum soon was adopted by other secondary schools all over England. This eminent humanist and educator admonished the clergy for their ignorance and immorality and stressed the individual's reformation.[1] He wrote:

> If he be a lawful bishop, he of himself does nothing, but God in him. But if he do attempt anything of <u>himself</u>, he is then a breeder of poison. And if he also bring this to the birth, and carry into execution his own will, he is wickedly

[1] V[irgil] B. H[eltzel], "John Colet," <u>Collier's Encyclopedia</u>, Vol. 5 (New York: Collier and Son, 1956).

> distilling poison to the destruction of the Church. This has now indeed been done for many years past, and has by this time so increased as to take powerful hold on all members of the Church; so that, unless that Mediator who alone can do so, who created and founded the church out of nothing for Himself (therefore does St. Paul often call it a "creature")--unless, I say, the Mediator Jesus lay to his hand with all speed, our most disordered church cannot be far from death. . . . Men consult not God on what is to be done, by constant prayer, but take counsel with men, whereby they shake and overthrow everything. All (as we must own with grief, and as I write with both grief and tears) seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's, not heavenly things but earthly, what will bring them to death, not what will bring them to life eternal.[1]

Providing Francis a copy of Encomium moriae or The Praise of Folly by the famous Dutch scholar and humanist, Desiderius Erasmus, Brewster explained that Erasmus had been greatly influenced in his philosophy by Petrarch and in his life by Colet. It was the latter who had persuaded Erasmus to become a serious student of Greek after Erasmus had come

[1]John Colet as quoted by Frederic Seebohm, The Oxford Reformers, pp. 74-75 (1896), rpt. in J. Leslie Dunstan, ed., Protestantism (New York: George Braziller, 1962), pp. 28-29.

to England at the special invitation of one of his pupils, Lord Mountjoy. Erasmus later taught Greek at Cambridge University and carried on Petrarch's doctrine of classical study for the sake of revival and emulation so that men might again become more completely and maturely human.[1] He agreed with Colet and with Sir Thomas More, the great English statesman and humanist who became his closest friend, that theology should be redirected toward the essential meaning of the Scriptures and that philosophy should be turned into ethics. Virtue for these men, therefore, was social, not metaphysical.

Francis Cooke, as well as many others in the Pilgrim country, could enjoy the piercing wit of The Praise of Folly in which Erasmus ridiculed or derided much of man's behavior that seems natural or instinctive as the Goddess Folly ironically praises the stupidity and hypocrisy of her followers. Erasmus implied that man is capable of achieving a much more advanced level of disciplined existence, thereby reaping a greater degree of earthly happiness and self-fulfillment. The unsophisticated English midlanders had no difficulty recognizing the truth that lay behind such passages as:

> In a word, this folly is that that laid the foundation of cities; and by it, empire, authority, religion, policy, and public actions are preserved; neither is there anything in human life that is

[1]Shafer, op. cit., p. 262.

not a kind of pastime of folly.

.....

And next these come those that commonly call themselves the religious and monks, most false in both titles, when both a great part of them are farthest from religion, and no men swarm thicker in all places than themselves.

.....

But Christ, interrupting them in their vanities, which otherwise were endless, will ask them, "Whence this new kind of Jews? I acknowledge one commandment, which is truly mine, of which alone I hear nothing. I promised, 'tis true, my Father's heritage, and that without parables, not to cowls, odd prayers, and fastings, but to the duties of faith and charity. Nor can I acknowledge them that least acknowledge their faults.

.....

For whoever did but truly weigh with himself how great a burden lies upon his shoulders that would truly discharge the duty of a prince, he would not think it worth his while to make his way to a crown by perjury and parricide. He would consider that he that takes a scepter in his hand should manage the public, not his private, interest. . . .

.....

A most inhuman and economical thing, and more to be execrated, that those great princes of the Church and true lights of the world should be reduced to a staff and a wallet. Whereas now, if there be anything that requires their pains, they leave that to Peter and Paul that have leisure enough; but if there be anything of honor or pleasure, they take that to themselves. By which means it is, yet by my courtesy, that scarce any kind of men live more voluptuously or with less trouble; as believing that Christ will be well enough pleased if in their mystical and almost mimical pontificality, ceremonies, titles of holiness and the like, and blessing and cursing, they play the parts of bishops. To work miracles is old and antiquated, and not in fashion now; to instruct the people, troublesome; to interpret the Scripture, pedantic; to pray, a sign one has little else to do; to shed tears, silly and womanish; to be poor, base; to be vanquished, dishonorable and little becoming him that scarce admits even kings to kiss his slipper; and lastly, to die, uncouth; and to be stretched on a cross, infamous.[1]

[1]Desiderius Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, translated by John Wilson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1971), pp. 41, 102, 105, 112-113, 119-120.

So Francis struggled to comprehend Erasmus, as in the final pages of his work the author asserted the ultimate values of Christian humanism. Reverend Clyfton on several occasions read to his followers not only excerpts from the works of Erasmus, but he also selected passages from Utopia by Sir Thomas More, that eminent English statesman and humanist who was beheaded because he could not follow his sovereign against the Pope. Inspired by Plato's Republic, More's Utopia was written to present an imaginary commonwealth evolving logically from the use of reason, which is common to all men whether or not they are Christian. The human virtues of justice, wisdom, temperance, and fortitude, all of which issue from reason, were utilized in More's ideal state. His reading of Plato and medieval Christian philosophy had provided More with the basis for his concepts, and he added to his design for an ideal commonwealth Christianity's three additional virtues of faith, hope, and charity, which were not to be learned through reason but which were to be divinely revealed.[1]

Frequently it was difficult for Clyfton's parishioners to reconcile the works of Utopia with what they actually knew of More. The Utopians condemned ascetic practices as nonrational, yet the English midlanders had heard that More

[1]Shafer, p. 265.

himself had worn a hair shirt next to his skin.[1] He showed the ills and corruption of the Christian society of Europe contrasted to the New World's inhabitants who lived in a state of primeval, natural virtue. Yet the people of the Pilgrim country knew that More had been a devout Christian. This fictional account of the marvelous land of Utopia where men lived peacefully in brotherhood and without corruption, where all were educated to take a place in society, where all worked and none idled, and where justice was made to end the vice or crime but not to destroy the individual who committed the act did much, however, among those who attended the Babworth church to arouse interest in the idea of resettlement for the purpose of forming a better society based on God-given reason and the Christian virtues. Such passages as these served to whet the appetites of Clyfton's little band for more religious freedom:

> . . . Whereof he durst define and determine nothing unadvisedly, as doubting whether God desiring manifold and divers sorts of honour, would inspire sundry men with sundry kinds of religion. And this surely he thought a very unmeet and foolish thing, and a point of arrogant presumption, to compel all other by violence and threatenings to agree to the same that thou believest to be true. Furthermore, though there be one religion which alone is true,

[1]Shafer, p. 265.

> and all other vain and superstitious, yet did he well foresee (so that the matter were handled with reason, and sober modesty) that the truth of its own power would at the last issue out and come to light. . . Therefore all this matter he left undiscussed, and gave to every man free liberty and choice to believe what he would. Saving that he earnestly and straightly charged them, that no man should conceive so vile and base an opinion of the dignity of man's nature, as to think that the souls do die and perish with the body; or that the world runneth at all adventures governed by no divine providence. . . . In these prayers every man recogniseth and acknowledgeth God to be his maker, his governor and the principal cause of all other goodness, thanking him for so many benefits received at his hand. But namely that through the favour of God he hath chanced into that public weal, which is most happy and wealthy, and hath chosen that religion, which he hopeth to be most true.[1]

The locale of Utopia, which was based, undoubtedly, on the published correspondence of Amerigo Vespucci in which he related his adventures during his voyage to the New World,

[1]Sir Thomas More, "Utopia," The Harvard Classics, Vol. 36, pp. 240, 249.

also intensely interested Clyfton's congregation. Already there was beginning to take shape in some minds the idea of removal from England so that complete religious liberty could be exercised. Certainly the exploits of Sir Francis Drake, the greatest of the naval adventurers of England during the reign of Elizabeth, added more fuel to the fire of the idea of removal in order to avoid religious persecution. Drake had passed through the Straits of Magellan into waters never before sailed by his countrymen; he continued up the west coast of South America to North America and to a locality as far north as the Golden Gate; he crossed the Pacific; and by way of the Cape of Good Hope he returned to England. Upon his return, he was knighted by the Queen on board his ship, The Golden Hind. In addition to being the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe, Drake in 1586 had brought home the despairing Virginian colony, and possibly it was he who introduced to England American tobacco and potatoes. He, indeed, had sailed around the New World.

In 1578 Sir Humphrey Gilbert was granted a charter by Queen Elizabeth to plant a colony in North America. His first attempt a failure, he tried again in 1583 and succeeded in founding a colony at St. John, Newfoundland. Englishmen avidly read the account of this voyage written by Edward Hayes, commander of The Golden Hind, the only ship to reach England of the three that set out from Newfoundland with

Gilbert, who perished with his ship in a storm.[1]

Sir Walter Raleigh, distinguished in almost all facets of public life during Elizabethan times and one of the great typical figures of the age, discovered Guiana in 1595. As Englishmen read his account of his discovery they foresaw a New World that might provide gold, food, land for crowded European nations, and sanctuary for those seeking refuge from religious persecution. Thus by now the idea of removal for religious reasons was more than a dream; it lay within the realm of possibility, indeed, even within that of reality.

As Clyfton's congregation pondered these momentous events that actually had occurred quite recently to their fellow countrymen, Francis, also, was continually provided with a wealth of provocative reading matter by Brewster, for whom much of such material had become available while he had been at court in the employ of Davison. One such work which projected the humanistic ideal of life as an art in itself, with education as a discipline intended for the harmonious and well-balanced development of all human abilities and qualities, was The Courtier by Baldassare Castiglione, an Italian humanist and, to some extent, a model for his own book. The pattern that Castiglione fashioned for the versatile Renaissance man was followed and adhered to at all the courts in Europe, as the author's central character was the

[1]Edward Hayes, "Sir Humphrey Gilbert's Voyage to Newfoundland," The Harvard Classics, Vol. 33 (New York: Collier Press, 1910), pp. 270-308.

worldly, broadly-educated man whose life was the court and who was dependent upon the court and its ruler. Francis Cooke, as an English midlander, realized this work was definitely a document of class, written by a gentleman of the court for gentlemen of the court; but he could identify with Castiglione in the latter's concern about war and diplomacy, for Castiglione believed in princely governments but knew that not all princes possessed the ability to rule. Francis, too, could agree wholeheartedly with the Italian author when he wrote concerning friars:

> Thus with a veile of holinesse, and this mischievous devise, many times they turn all their thoughtes to defile the chaste mind of some woman, oftentimes to sow variance betweene brethren, to governe states, to set up the one and plucke down the other, to chop off heades, to imprison and banish men, to be the ministers of wickednesse, and (in a manner) the storers and hoorders up of the roberies that manie Princes commit.[1]

Castiglione, in formulating the ideal courtier, had created a model for Elizabethan courtiers such as Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Philip Sidney, whose sonnets Brewster brought to Francis' attention as works of great beauty written by a

[1]Baldassare Castiglione, "The Courtier," Three Renaissance Classics, ed. Burton A. Milligan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 472.

man who was a genuine aristocrat and true gentleman in every way. Brewster also indicated to Francis the debt owed to Castiglione by Edmund Spenser, who had received some of his courtly ideals, as portrayed in The Faerie Queene, from the Italian author. As Francis read Spenser's work he felt he was experiencing a lesson in the art of right living as set forth by the humanists with due value set upon all the good and enjoyable possibilities of present life accompanied by proper emphasis upon the life to come. Spenser's work was rooted firmly in the English past, familiar to Francis as to Englishmen everywhere, yet The Faerie Queene combined all the thought, feeling, and matter which his period in history brought to Spenser.

There were many discussions, oftentimes related later to Francis, between Brewster and travelers passing through Scrooby on their way north. Court happenings and intrigues might be disclosed, and writers who were coming to the foreground with artistic triumphs in and around London and the court were mentioned. Certainly Christopher Marlowe, whom Brewster may have seen or known earlier at Cambridge, was among those discussed, for his Tamburlaine, Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta, and Edward II almost immediately had become successful plays, while his passionate private life, including his leanings toward heresy, and his untimely death were always matters of great speculation among the people.

One whose works were endlessly discussed with Brewster

by all travelers was the prolific writer, William Shakespeare, whose plays showed to his countrymen the whole range of human moods, of human character, and of human perceptions. A tremendous success in London, Shakespeare was well-known and well-quoted even in the northern midlands as the great portrayer of human truth. Shakespeare, to a great extent, capitalized on and contributed to the arrival of humanism or the conviction that man's present earthly nature contains elements of goodness and greatness which may rise to heroic proportions. Now tragedy befalling such a hero needed an explanation; and Shakespeare, refusing to shirk the problem as his contemporaries tended to do by simply making the hero bigger and greater than the ordinary man, with the hero's fall, therefore, more awesome, made his heroes impressive by their nobility of nature but with fatal flaws of character which might explain and justify the tragedies which they experienced. The hero's nobility, too, was individual and personal--another facet of humanism.

Francis thoroughly enjoyed hearing and reading anything of Shakespeare. He knew the playwright was no Puritan and that he was no moralist; yet the popular bard seemed to catch more of the true feelings of the people of the Pilgrim country than did any other writer of the period, for Shakespeare was merry and reiterated the simple joy of life, condemning only those human traits that oppose the goodness of human nature. He projected the belief that good men believe

in life after death while evil men believe the universe ends when they die; that creation is good while destruction is evil; that kindness is good, cruelty is evil; that man is good when he is concerned with the welfare of others, when he meets his obligations, and when he has generous impulses; that tragedy will always be a part of life for death and evil will always persist, but that life continues on in a never-ending stream and good does survive. The philosophy was that which an unsophisticated good midlander would formulate, to a degree, for himself; the language in which that philosophy was couched by Shakespeare was recognized by all as written by one with a very special gift.

Humanism's belief that man had a right to live, as an individual, completely and happily on earth and that the good life could be lived on ethical terms was a philosophy that was incorporated into the tenets of Protestantism. Man was regarded not only as a potential dweller in Heaven but also as a rational and developing personality on earth. The humanistic practice of tracing ideas back to their sources in classical literature helped to destroy the authority of the medieval church and Rome's claim to its sovereignty as sole interpreter of Christian doctrine. The humanists protested against blind faith because it made of human life a preparation rather than an achievement; they protested against medieval organization because it reduced men to classes rather than allowing for reason which would lead each to seek his own destiny. Francis

Cooke was to join the protest; he would attempt to live the good life on this earth, and he would achieve what he could by seeking his destiny through the use of his own reason.

CHAPTER VI

WHOM GOD SO ELECTS

It was quite apparent to Francis Cooke that William Brewster and Reverend Clyfton were living examples of most of the humanistic philosophy in their daily lives as well as in their beliefs. Both deplored ignorance and worked ceaselessly to do their utmost to educate to the best of their ability those who came to rely upon them as their leaders. Both men believed that if man were educated, his code of ethics naturally would rise and both society and the Church would benefit. They placed, then, great emphasis on man's relation with other men as well as on man's relation with God. They believed thoroughly in an infallible Bible, but not in an infallible church. God's word was God's will for them, with the New Testament setting forth the plans for the administration and the authoritative organization of the Christian Church.

Due to his own partially-formed beliefs, Francis felt inevitably drawn to Brewster and Clyfton. The philosophy by which he was to live his life was being constantly shaped and expanded by these men for whom he had the utmost respect and in whom he could place his complete confidence. Extremely wise in their relations with others, Brewster and Clyfton were

realizing the tremendous moral and spiritual responsibilities their position as leaders and as two of the most learned men of the area was placing upon them. Believing that much of society was corrupt and that state reforms were to no avail, they thought that the only path to human salvation was through a return to piety within oneself and in one's relationships with his fellow men. Both men labored endlessly to uphold the trust of those who relied upon them for spiritual guidance, and they constantly provided for those who sought answers to questions with spiritual and philosophical implications a background of religious writings including a great amount of early-Reformation literature. Brewster and Clyfton had brought the beliefs of such early reformers as Wycliffe, Hus, and Savonarola to the people's attention, declaring that these men had believed that every human soul by divine right had direct access to God without a human intermediary acting in his behalf and that the individual possessed the capability to interpret and understand God's message. Now the beliefs of four of the most influential Protestant reformers of Europe--Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and John Knox--were expounded by Reverend Clyfton in his sermons to his humble congregation of the English midlands. Brewster corroborated such teaching by making material from his own library accessible to those who were interested, and Francis seemed to have an insatiable desire for such literature as he pondered matters of vital concern to him.

The writings of Martin Luther were of great interest to Francis, for that great Reformation prophet was both the product and the leader of seething dissatisfaction with Rome and papal authority. Although he was not actually a humanist himself, Luther was indirectly influenced by humanistic ideas.[1] Living from 1483 to 1546, this erstwhile German monk, university teacher, and preacher detested the Church's system of indulgences, which were the substitution of money for an act of penance to be performed by an individual to obtain God's forgiveness or for the release of certain of the dead from purgatory by transferring to them extra credits of the saints. Finally in 1517, unable to tolerate such practices any longer and following the customary practice of scholars of posting their ideas in a public place, Luther nailed to the door of the castle church at Wittenberg a parchment placard bearing ninety-five theses for debate covering three main points: an objection to the avowed object of the expenditure of money gained by indulgences, a denial of the pope's powers over purgatory, and a consideration of the sinner's welfare.[2]

Luther objected to the intent to spend the money to build a universal shrine to shelter the bones of St. Peter

[1]Edith Simon, The Reformation (New York: Time-Life Books, 1966), p. 38.

[2]Roland Bainton, Here I Stand, A Life of Martin Luther (New York: Abingdon Press, 1950), p. 80.

by writing: "The revenues of all Christendom are being sucked into this insatiable basilica. The Germans laugh at calling this the common treasure of Christendom. Before long all the churches, palaces, walls, and bridges of Rome will be built out of our money."[1]

Regarding the pope's powers Luther had this to say: "Papal indulgences do not remove guilt. Beware of those who say that indulgences effect reconciliation with God. . . . The pope can remove only those penalties which he himself has imposed on earth, for Christ did not say, "Whatsoever I have bound in heaven you may loose on earth."[2]

As for the sinner's welfare Luther remonstrated: "Indulgences are positively harmful to the recipient because they impede salvation by diverting charity and inducing a false sense of security. Christians should be taught that he who gives to the poor is better than he who receives a pardon. He who spends his money for indulgences instead of relieving want receives not the indulgence of the pope but the indignation of God."[3]

An English midlander could well understand that portion of the Theses that had recommended financial relief for nationalistically-bent Germans; that part of the work that

[1]Bainton, Martin Luther, p. 80.

[2]Ibid., p. 81.

[3]Ibid., p. 82.

sought the crucifixion of the self was totally demanding, however, and was almost incomprehensible to some of the midlanders; yet it was the material which gave great impetus to the Reformation. Luther stated: "God works by contraries so that a man feels himself to be lost in the very moment when he is on the point of being saved. When God is about to justify a man, he damns him. Whom he would make alive he must first kill. God's favor is so communicated in the form of wrath that it seems farthest when it is at hand. Man must first cry out that there is no health in him. He must be consumed with horror. This is the pain of purgatory. I do not know where it is located, but I do know that it can be experienced in this life. . . . When a man believes himself to be utterly lost, light breaks. Peace comes in the word of Christ through faith. . . . The merits of Christ are vastly more potent when they bring crosses than when they bring remissions."[1]

In 1520 Luther published several tracts: The Sermon on Good Works, The Papacy at Rome, The Address to the German Nobility, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, and The Freedom of the Christian Man. In his statement addressed to the German nobility he advocated the reform of the Church by secular authorities, as the Church seemed incapable of reforming itself. As church and state heretofore had been

[1]Bainton, Martin Luther, pp. 82-83.

inseparable with the Church ultimately the superior, Luther's idea was revolutionary.[1]

In The Babylonian Captivity of the Church Luther proposed the reduction of the sacraments of the Church from seven to two--an idea which struck at church dogma rather than at church practice, and which would produce an irreparable rupture with Rome. He discarded confirmation, ordination, penance, marriage, and extreme unction but retained the rites of baptism and communion, stating that these last two were the only sacraments to have been instituted directly by Christ. He did not abolish completely the idea of penance, for he considered contrition essential and thought confession beneficial as long as it was not demanded by the Church.[2]

Francis Cooke noted with particular interest and with thorough agreement Luther's denial of the sacrament of ordination, thereby repudiating the caste system of the clergy. This led, inevitably, to the priesthood of all believers, for Luther believed ordination was simply the rite of the Church whereby a minister is elected to serve a particular office. Such a minister was not to be exempt from civil court jurisdiction and was not empowered to perform the other sacraments. Any Christian, then, if so decreed by the congregation, could do what a minister might do. The words of Luther were: "All

[1]Simon, op. cit., p. 41.

[2]Ibid.

of us who have been baptized are priests without distinction, but those whom we call priests are ministers, chosen from among us that they should do all things in our name and their priesthood is nothing but a ministry. The sacrament of ordination, therefore, can be nothing other than a certain rite of choosing a preacher in the Church."[1]

Luther's views of the two sacraments that he did retain were extremely radical so far as the dogma of the Church was concerned, for he denied monasticism as a second baptism, believing that no vow should be taken beyond that of the initial baptism. He also insisted that the effectiveness of the mass depended on the faith of the receiver and was not due only to the Greater Power within itself, no matter what experience the receiver might undergo. For Luther faith was a gift from God to those to whom He willed it, and as such it was effective even without the mass. So Luther defined his belief in the individual but in quite different terms than those of the humanists. He was not seeking the fulfillment of individual capabilities; rather, he insisted simply that each human must answer for himself to God. The faith necessary for the sacrament must be the individual's faith. Luther's Church, necessarily small, would consist only of those with the kind of faith that opposed all desires of the natural man among which would be, most certainly, pride and

[1]Bainton, op. cit., p. 138.

all human pretensions.[1]

Luther wrestled with the problem of infant baptism in his attempt to reconcile his belief that infants should be taken at birth from Satan's power with his principle concerning the effectiveness of the sacrament depending on the faith of the receiver. He accepted the faith of the sponsor of the infant at baptism as that which would initiate another into a Christian community. Thus baptism linked church and society, and the same individuals constituted church and state.[2]

Francis wondered why Luther had been able to precipitate church reform that others for over a century had tried to initiate and, for the most part, had failed to achieve. Luther's ideas were not entirely new, for in part his doctrines had been drawn, although perhaps not consciously, from the ideas of Wycliffe, Hus, Savonarola, and Erasmus. It seemed to Francis that Luther had been born at an auspicious time, for he could address a nation that desperately wished to separate from Rome. Too, Luther spoke to the common people in language they could understand rather than to an intellectual elite. He was successful, more than any other individual, in breaking the character of medieval religion so that its universality never would be restored.

Ulrich Zwingli, born in Switzerland the same year as

[1]Bainton, op. cit., p. 141.

[2]Ibid.

Luther, was educated by humanists to value the classics and to deplore clerical corruption. Serving as parish priest for various smaller parishes in Switzerland, he became in 1519 priest at Zurich, and there he began his reforms. He espoused the doctrines of the humanists, particularly those of Erasmus, and shared their respect for the intellect, interpreting the Bible by reason which he believed would lead to practical religion. In his work, On the Clarity and Certainty of God's Word, published in 1522, he described his shift from philosophy and theology to the Bible. Agreeing with Luther in many respects but far more severe in his doctrinal approach, Zwingli became an evangelical reformer due to his acceptance of the Bible as the only rule of faith and conduct, to his acceptance of Christ as man's only mediator between him and God, and to his belief in the grace of God as the only hope of salvation, or to his belief in predestination. He then became less an Erasmian reformer and broke completely with Rome.[1] Zwingli wrote:

> . . . While I was reflecting on this diversity of opinion in the earthen vessels, and praying to God that He would shew men an outlet to the state of uncertainty it produces, He says, Fool, dost not thou remember "The word of the Lord abideth forever?" hold to this. . . For this cause I put everything

[1]Bewkes, op. cit., pp. 469-470.

> aside, and come to the point, that I would rely on no single thing, on no single word, so firmly as on that which comes from the mouth of the Lord. . . . I beg your worships well to consider how the Papal authority has taken captive the Word of God, and hid it in darkness, whereby the truth has been withheld from us, and an empty semblance presented to us in the place of it, whereby we have been not only cozened out of our worldly goods, but, as there is ground to fear, have had our soul's salvation put in jeopardy. This is the more especially now to be feared, since the truth has been set in the light of day, and yet many, blinded by papistical doctrine, will not yield obedience to it.[1]

The scholarly humanist reformer, Philip Melanchthon, wrote in 1530 The Augsburg Confession, the earliest of many formal statements of the beliefs of Protestant churches in Germany, at the request of Emperor Charles V, who hoped for a reunion of religious parties within his Empire. The Confession, approved by Luther, consisted of twenty-one short paragraphs dealing with subjects such as God, original sin, the Son of God, justification, the Church, repentance, new

[1]Ulrich Zwingli as quoted by J. Leslie Dunstan in Protestantism, pp. 70-71.

obedience, ecclesiastical orders, civil affairs, and free will.[1] These were the main considerations:

1. The only final authority for either conduct or belief is the Scriptures. In them God's will and God's love as shown in Christ are revealed to those who have power through the Holy Spirit to comprehend.
2. Faith or trust in divine love, thus revealed, is the one condition of salvation.
3. Faith is given by God, not achieved by man. God in His mercy grants this faith and those who receive it are the elect.
4. The community of those who possess this faith is the true Church, with Christ as its head. The Church's growth and unity are developed by preaching the true Word and by the observance of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the only sacraments clearly authorized in the Scriptures.[2]

The Helvetic Confession, written by Henry Bullinger, successor to Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, reiterated these same principles and was the cornerstone of the Reformed Faith.

[1]Ulrich Zwingli as quoted by J. Leslie Dunstan in Protestantism, pp. 72-74.

[2]Bewkes, op. cit., p. 469.

In his sermons Reverend Clyfton drew deeply from the works of John Calvin, the renowned French theologian. Clyfton frequently mentioned the fact that many English Protestant exiles had lived in Geneva when Calvin was there to escape the persecution of the Catholic Mary Tudor. These exiles were known as the Marian exiles, and among them had been relatives of many of the midlanders of Francis Cooke's acquaintance, perhaps relatives of Francis himself. Calvin spiritually continued Zwingli's reforms and considered Protestantism as something to be analyzed, defined, and then put into rigid practice. He lacked the humanity and sympathy of Luther, and his doctrine was based more on the rationalistic legalism of the Old Testament than on the Gospel in the New Testament.[1]

Calvin's theology was stated in his work, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, a defense of the reform movement and an instructional text. This work was read more by Francis and his fellow midlanders than any single work by Luther, and they realized how tremendously The Institutes had affected and effected church reform. A forbidding God as absolute sovereign was the focal point of Calvin's theology, whereas Luther had emphasized a merciful God and had attacked the religious practices that obscured that concept. These are the main points of The Institutes:

1. The unconditional sovereignty of God, revealed

[1]Bewkes, op. cit., p. 470.

in the Holy Scriptures. Whatever happens, happens because of God's will.

2. Man, because of his depravity and helplessness which followed his original sin of disobedience, needs a superhuman savior for his salvation; thus, Christ became man and suffered in man's stead.
3. There is predestination by which God elects some to salvation through faith in Christ's sacrifice; those not so elected are condemned to everlasting punishment.
4. The elect constitute the Church. Civil and ecclesiastical rulers must preserve this true religion. As divine law is over all, civil officials must act under the direction of ecclesiastical authorities in God's service.[1]

The meaning of human life then, according to Calvin, was to glorify God by obeying His will. Seriousness, industriousness, and thrift were divinely ordained virtues, while frivolity and luxury were vices. As divine law governed all of life, it was within the sphere of the Church to regulate state, society, politics, and commerce, as well as to regulate the private affairs of men. Here Calvin, although a reformer, was adhering to the medieval doctrine of theocracy as he argued

[1]Bewkes, p. 471.

for the supremacy of the Church over education, law, and industry. Such were the ideas that Puritanism was incorporating in England during the last half of the sixteenth century. The worst sinners, from the standpoint of the teachings of Jesus, could thus become successful examples of the Calvinistic virtues of thrift, sobriety, and industry. So, rather than acting as a restraint upon the growing capitalism, Calvinism gave religious sanction to the virtues making for success, and it considered failure almost a vice.[1]

Calvin believed that ministers should be men of superior learning and holiness, totally dependent upon that superiority rather than upon the authority of holy orders as were Catholic priests. In Geneva he helped draw up a legislative code, The Ecclesiastical Ordinances, a constitution for the Reformed Church, dividing the Church into a hierarchy of pastors and teachers (clergymen), plus the elders and deacon (laymen). In order to preach, new pastors needed the sanction of the magistrates, other acting pastors, and the congregation. Although this appeared to be the first application of democracy to ecclesiastical affairs, actually the congregation participated very little. Such participation was to evolve later, after Calvin's concepts had been enlarged by other men just as he had developed the ideas of

[1]Bewkes, p. 476.

Luther and Zwingli.[1]

Clyfton's small congregation thus was brought to realize and to understand the basic differences between Luther and Calvin, for the midlanders knew of Luther's conviction that God was merciful and forgave man's sin by reinstating him in divine favor. Human merit played no part for Luther; only faith was all important in achieving divine grace. The Christian was free from fear of punishment and time-consuming religious duties, so he could devote himself to the service of mankind. This did not imply license; it did mean all-embracing faith. And, if the means of salvation rested in faith in the Gospel, then the Church must teach and evangelize; thus religion and secular affairs were almost completely separated in Luther's theology with religion a personal and highly subjective matter.[2]

John Knox, that violent preacher of the Scottish reformation and bitter foe of the Catholic Queen Mary of Lorraine and, later, of her daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, injected Calvinism into the social and political structure of an economically-poor nation. The peasant was poorer in Scotland than in England as the land was much less fertile; there were few cities and less industry and business, with power mainly wielded by the feudal barons who had never been subdued by any

[1]Simon, op. cit., p. 61.

[2]Bewkes, p. 473.

monarch. Knox's reforms in Scotland began to give to the common people a voice in church affairs, culminating in civil war. At the cessation of the war the Scottish Lords of the Congregation of Jesus Christ asked Knox to draw up a confession of faith. Knox complied, basing the confession on the doctrine of Calvin. The Scottish Parliament then abolished Catholic rites and the authority of the pope and made religion a responsibility of the state.[1]

The people of Clyfton's congregation remembered the name of Knox well, since he had lived in England for a time. He had served as minister at various places and had managed to enlist Queen Elizabeth's assistance in his and the Protestant party's successful attempt to reform the Church in Scotland and in their opposition to Mary Queen of Scots. It was he who was responsible for, or at least credited with, the insertion of the black rubric in the Second Book of Common Prayer. This rubric stated that kneeling to receive communion did not imply any adoration of the elements as Christ was not bodily present in the bread and wine. Actually Knox believed just the opposite; he thought kneeling at communion did signify belief in Christ's presence so he opposed kneeling. It was due to Knox, however, that the English Prayer Book repudiated Christ's presence at communion, although Knox himself probably had not drafted the rubric.[2]

[1]Simon, p. 63.

[2]Jasper Ridley, John Knox (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 108.

Knox's Admonition to England, published in 1554, was the longest and most important tract he had written thus far. He attacked the Protestant nobles of England for their insincerity during Edward's reign and then for submitting to idolatry under Mary Tudor. He denounced the Catholic bishops and bitterly attacked Mary Tudor, shocking about as many Protestants as Catholics by so doing. Knox did not say openly that she should have been killed during Edward's reign so that she would never have been queen and thereby able to persecute Protestants, but he did refer to such a possibility:

> . . . And of Lady Mary, who hath not heard that she was sober, merciful, and one that loved the commonwealth of England? Had she, I say, and such as now be of her pestilent counsel, been sent to Hell before these days, then should not their iniquity and cruelty so manifestly have appeared to the world. . . . God, for His great mercies' sake, stir up some Phinehas, Elias or Jehu, that the blood of abominable idolaters may pacify God's wrath, that it consume not the whole multitude. . . . Delay not Thy vengeance, O Lord, but let death devour them in haste; let the earth swallow them up; and let them go down quick to the hells.[1]

Continuing his attack on Queen Mary of England in The

[1]Ridley, pp. 186-187.

First Blast of the Trumpet in 1558, Knox began with these words:

> Wonder it is, that amongst so many pregnant wits as the Isle of Great Brittanny hath produced, so many godly and zealous preachers as England did some time nourish, and amongst so many learned, and men of grave judgement, as this day by Jezebel are exiled, none is found so stout of courage, so faithful to God, nor loving to their native country, that they dare admonish the inhabitants of that isle, how abominable before God is the empire or rule of a wicked woman, yea, of a traitress and bastard. . . .[1]

He ended by warning the English people that, if God sent anyone to overthrow Mary, anyone who defended her would be acting against God's wishes.

In his Letter to the Queen Regent, written in 1556 to Mary of Lorraine, Knox directly opposed the doctrine of Christian obedience to monarchs:

> . . . True it is, God hath commanded kings to be obeyed, but like true it is, that in things which they commit against His glory, or when cruelly without cause they rage against their brethren, the members of Christ's body, He hath commanded no

[1]Ridley, pp. 268-269.

> obedience, but rather He hath approved, yea, and greatly rewarded such as have opposed themselves to their ungodly commandments and blind rage.[1]

Knox stressed the duty of the common people in religious matters in his publication of a letter addressed to the commonalty of Scotland:

> Ye, although ye be but subjects, may lawfully require of your superiors, be it of your king, be it of your lords, rulers and powers, that they provide for you true preachers, and that they expel such as, under the name of pastors, devour and destroy the flock, not feeding the same as Christ Jesus hath commanded. And if in this point your superiors be negligent, or yet pretend to maintain tyrants in their tyranny, most justly ye may provide true teachers for yourselves, be it in your cities, towns or villages; them ye may maintain and defend against all that shall persecute them.[2]

Knox's First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women, directed against Mary Tudor, advocated revolution against princes, and, because of this, the work was despised by Elizabeth when she came to the English throne in 1558. It seemed subversive of the whole social order and

[1]Ridley, p. 275.

[2]Ibid., p. 277.

was banned throughout most of Europe, even at Geneva by Calvin. It paved the way, however, for armed revolt in the name of Protestantism in many countries and was well read and remembered by many of Clyfton's congregation.

Thus Clyfton's small group of English midlanders was brought to the realization that the foremost continental reformers had agreed on certain fundamental doctrines, among which the most important were justification by faith and the belief in the Scriptures as infallible to follow in life and in practice. However, almost immediately following the establishment of the Protestant churches disagreements over doctrine and practice erupted, for when man became free to follow the dictates of his own reason and conscience as he believed were directed by the Scriptures, all the factors producing individual differences were bound to affect the nature and form of his religious life. National heritage and politics, as well as one's own conscience and reason, influenced the divisiveness within Protestantism. Francis Cooke well knew and acutely felt these influences; they helped him to crystallize his beliefs, and they were to fabricate for him a new life.

CHAPTER VII

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

From 1586 Reverend Clyfton had continued at Babworth his "forward" expositions of the Bible and of the thinking of the great religious reformers for his congregation which was drawn from the citizenry of central England. Perhaps affecting his parishioners even more was Clyfton's explicit presentation of the background and development of Puritanism within their own country, for he stressed the fact that church reform in England had taken a somewhat different form than it had in other countries in which Lutheran and Calvinistic practices prevailed. Clyfton not only was to preach about the reforms that had happened in the past, however; he also was to live through an era of great changes himself and was to flee from the persecution he so often had mentioned in his sermons.

Francis Cooke, along with the other members of Clyfton's congregation, thus realized that when Henry VIII had ascended to the English throne in 1509, papal authority was still supreme in England. Henry was no Protestant; he had denounced Luther's theses in the Golden Book, published four years after the appearance of Luther's work. For that effort Henry had had bestowed upon him by the Pope the title of "Defender

of the Faith."[1] Henry, however, fully intended to be the ultimate power within his own kingdom. His dispute with Rome was political and was precipitated by his desire for a divorce from Catherine of Aragon so that, hopefully, he might sire a male heir with a new wife, Anne Boleyn. When the divorce was refused, Henry began to re-establish the English Church, retaining much of Catholicism but completely rejecting the Pope as the supreme authority of church and state. By the time Henry died in 1547, the English Church through the King's political maneuvering had abolished papal supremacy, had recognized the monarch as its supreme ruler, had abolished monasticism, and had changed the liturgy considerably.

By 1553 under Edward VI, Henry's young son, the Church of England had become much more Protestant only to revert back to the supremacy of papal authority under the Catholic Mary Tudor, daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine and the wife of the Catholic King Philip II of Spain. Many Protestants fled England for Germany or Switzerland during Mary's reign, and there they absorbed the doctrines of Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. Upon returning to England after Mary's death and the accession of Elizabeth I to the throne, these religious exiles, known as the Marian exiles and, of course, greatly influenced by the continental reformers, began to attempt to

[1]Willison, Saints and Strangers, p. 19.

change the practices and doctrine of the Anglican Church.

Elizabeth, however, was not interested in abstract dogma and doctrine and favored Protestantism only as an assertion of national independence. She was not of a profoundly religious temperament; she hated moralizing but loved the pomp and show of the vigorous age in which she lived.[1] She would and did adopt the religious policy that would be most advantageous for the Crown. The Act of Supremacy of 1559 restored to the monarch all authority over church affairs, and the Act of Uniformity of the same year made the use of the Book of Common Prayer of 1552 compulsory, and since church and state were one, the Act demanded uniformity of belief. So the English Church under Elizabeth was firmly under royal control, Catholic in doctrine but nonpapal.[2] By royal decree Elizabeth's bishops could question, fine, imprison, hang, or burn alive any religious nonconformist who held dangerous views, who refused to attend the Anglican Church, or who printed any unlicensed literature which, when unlicensed, could only be considered seditious. It was during this time, of course, that many of the passengers who were to undertake the voyage of the Mayflower were born.

Demands for reform were becoming louder and more

[1]Willison, p. 23.

[2]Craig R. Thompson, The English Church in the Sixteenth Century (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 9.

frequent, however, led in part by those Marian exiles who had returned to England greatly influenced by Calvin's doctrines of church and state. By 1560 these reformers in England had become known as Puritans, a name originally given to them as a term of derision. They believed that the Church of England retained too many Catholic ways, and they wished to purify the Church of popishness or elaborate ceremony and the hierarchy of bishops. John Foxe, a Marian exile, wrote Acts and Monuments or the Book of Martyrs, first published in 1554, describing Queen Mary's persecution of Protestants. Highly popular, the book illustrated the eternal struggle between Christ and Antichrist (the Pope). Foxe believed that England would be the first to reach a successful Reformation because "God's Englishmen" were divinely chosen and had a particular national destiny.[1]

The most disturbing demand on the part of some of the Puritans, according to Elizabeth's thinking, was for the Calvinistic practice of lay participation in church affairs. The Queen realized that such action within the Church could lead to the demand for the same prerogative within the state. Even within Elizabeth's court, however, there was great support for the reformers. The Earl of Leicester, one of Elizabeth's favorites, was a self-professed Puritan, along with the poets, Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser, and

[1]Thompson, p. 38.

Lord Burghley, the Queen's treasurer, as well as Dr. Laurence Chaderton, a distinguished scholar and ecclesiastic who later helped prepare the King James Version of the Bible.[1] Many of the Puritans, comfortably situated in life, resigned themselves to a certain conformity in religious matters as they did not wish to jeopardize their personal safety and wealth. But there were many varieties of Puritanism with followers in all classes of society. Such was the milieu in which Francis Cooke was born and in which he grew to manhood. During his youth separation from the Church of England was not seriously considered by those who avidly desired reform, as most of the puritans were content to remain in the Church and work for its purification. With the aid of an incessant barrage of religious tracts, however, that situation was to change greatly.

In 1566, twenty years before Clyfton had assumed the duties of rector at Babworth, an anonymous pamphlet, entitled A briefe discourse against the outwarde apparell and Ministring garments of the popishe church, had appeared repudiating the use of church vestments as a symbol of papal authority and also denying the Queen's right to demand religious conformity. These objections were to become the two basic principles of Puritan nonconformity, as they set forth the beliefs that the Scriptures gave the complete plan for

[1]Willison, p. 29.

building God's church and that any magistrate was under the authority of the church.[1]

This first literary attack on the Church of England was followed by many others advocating reforms and, also, by answers to the attacks generally penned by bishops arguing that while the Scriptures contained the necessary doctrines for salvation, the details of its administrative organization were left to the Church which was ruled by a godly magistrate, Queen Elizabeth. While these early pamphlets did not attack the episcopal hierarchy directly, a few years later Thomas Cartwright, a professor of divinity at Cambridge, requested the removal of the names and offices of archbishop and bishop to be replaced by those of minister and of deacon, as Cartwright himself visualized these offices from his interpretation of the Scriptures. He advocated that church government be placed in the hands of the presbytery consisting of elders, a reform that would provide for equality among ministers.[2]

Elizabeth, extremely conscious of the growing ferment among her people and of the increasing number of pamphlets appealing to that unrest, placed more rigid restrictions on the printing, binding, and sale of books and pamphlets. In

[1]Donald J. McGinn, John Penry and the Marprelate Controversy (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1966), p. 10.

[2]Ibid., p. 12.

1572 she commanded that all efforts to reform the Book of Common Prayer by ridding it of offensive rites and ceremonies be ceased.[1]

The Church of England and the Book of Common Prayer were attacked shortly thereafter in two anonymous pamphlets, the Admonition to the Parliament and the Second Admonition. John Field and Thomas Wilcox, probably the authors of the first Admonition, and Cartwright, undoubtedly the writer of the Second Admonition, set forth the model for church reorganization. In his three Replies Cartwright provided the basis for English presbyterianism and for English nonconformity in general. He declared that these passages from the Epistles of St. Paul provided for the presbyterian form of church government:[2]

> I Corinthians XII 28: And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.
>
> Ephesians IV 8: Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . 11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists;

[1] McGinn, p. 13.

[2] Ibid., pp. 14-15

> and some, pastors and teachers. 12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Reverend Clyfton emphasized in his sermons that, although Cartwright did not advocate separatism, he had believed that the entire ecclesiastical order should be divided into the "extraordinary, or those that endured for a time," the apostles, evangelists, and prophets, and the "ordinary, which are perpetual," the elders governing the whole church and the deacons in charge of only one part. The division of the elders would consist of the pastors to preach and of the doctors to teach, along with the senior elders who would elect, choose, and dismiss ecclesiastical officers, and who, in addition, would discipline members of the congregation privately by means of admonition. Cartwright believed that these duties were set forth in Matthew XVIII 15:[1]

> Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear

[1] McGinn, p. 16.

> the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Much of the religious controversy concerned what was meant by the term "church," or the ecclesiae, for excommunication was governed by this group. Opinions were divergent as to who should be considered a member. John Whitgift, Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University and later Archbishop of Canterbury and spokesman for the episcopalian hierarchy, believed that the "church" was those who had authority in it by being appointed. Cartwright argued:

> Now I would ask who be meant by the church here? If he /Whitgift/ say by the church are meant all the people, then I will ask how a man can conveniently complain to all the whole congregation or how can the whole congregation conveniently meet to decide of this matter? . . . Well, if it be not the people that be meant by the church, who is it? I hear M. Doctor say it is the pastor; but if he will say so and speak so strangely, he must warrant it with some other places of Scripture where the church is taken for one, which is as much as to say as one man is many, one member is a body, one alone is a company. And besides this strangeness of speech, it is clean contrary to the meaning of our Savior Christ. . . . Seeing then that the church is neither the whole congregation nor the pastor alone, it

> followeth that by the church here he meaneth the pastor with the ancients or elders. . . .[1]

Whitgift answered Cartwright's attacks by writing Answere to a certen Libell and the Defense of the Aunswere, both of which contained the standard episcopal principles. Puritan writers in turn responding to Whitgift dwelt on three main points:

1. The church bishops should be removed as the presbyterian form of church government was set forth in the New Testament.
2. The civil magistrate should not be supreme in the church.
3. The ministers of the Anglican Church were ignorant, not because they lacked education or learning but because they read liturgically-correct homilies to their congregations rather than always preaching to them. If the Word were preached rather than read to man, he, through the power of his natural capabilities and an "inner light" given by God to his elect, would understand the divine truth.[2]

When William Brewster had entered Cambridge in 1580, he found that he had landed in the midst of the growing

[1] McGinn, p. 17.

[2] Ibid., pp. 19-22.

controversy between Anglican and Puritan, for Cambridge was a center for Puritan thinkers who still were attempting, through peaceful means, the reform of the established Church. One who was more radical was Robert Browne, a graduate of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge, who had preached such advanced religious principles at the University and who had caused such a furor that he had been forced to move to Norwich, a center for more advanced Puritan thinking. Here he continued to preach, holding private religious meetings which were not connected with any parish church, and here he continued to encounter trouble. Repeatedly jailed by the bishop, "Troublechurch" Browne and his followers, who were called Brownists or Separatists, fled to Holland where he published two pamphlets, A Treatise of Reformation without Tarying for Anie and A Booke which Sheweth the Life and Manners of all True Christians. These works formulated the basic principles of separatism and were to provide, to a great extent, the foundation for the congregationalism of Brewster's group.[1] Browne's seven principles were:

1. The sole Head of the church was Christ.
2. The Church was the body of Christians united by a covenant.
3. Church membership was composed of those who were truly Christians.

[1]Willison, pp. 30-31.

4. Church officers would be patterned after those found in the New Testament.
5. The New Testament held the comprehensive guide and model for church organization.
6. Each individual church was independent and self-governing, yet was joined with other like churches in helpful fellowship.
7. There was to be complete separation of church and state.[1]

The concept that, as church and state were one, church reform necessarily had to wait until the state took action was rejected by Browne. He believed that the Kingdom of God was "not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather by the worthiest, were they ever so few." These few should separate from the church as the Scriptures bade them, as St. Paul himself had said: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."[2]

Browne referred to First Corinthians 12.18, as written in the Geneva Bible of 1560, the Bible used by all Separatists, and added two more passages to describe various duties:[3]

[1]P. Adelstein Johnson, The First Century of Congregationalism in Iowa (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1945), p. 28.

[2]Willison, p. 31.

[3]Ibid., p. 32.

> I Timothy 5. 17: Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.
>
> Romans 12. 6-8: Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

The Holy Discipline of the Brownists rejected Calvin's theory that all who were baptized made up the true church; rather, the irreligious, whether baptized or not, were not included in Browne's church of "saincts" who were to "watch one an other and trie out all wickednes."[1] This could and did lead to some beneficial soul-searching as well as to a great deal of detrimental prying into another's affairs. Browne's church failed, and he returned to England and to the Anglican fold, rejecting all Brownist doctrines for which he was bitterly hated by Puritans and Separatists alike.

Robert Harrison, also a Separatist, writing in 1583 his A Little Treatise uppon the firste Verse of the 122. Psalm. Stirring up unto carefull desiring and dutifull labouring for

[1]McGinn, p. 28.

true church Gouernement, projected the belief that force had to be used to achieve the desired reforms. He was convinced, too, that a minister needed no other justification for his calling than the approval and consent of his congregation. He thus attacked the power of Parliament and that of the Queen as the Church's supreme magistrate. He also denied the validity of the sacraments performed in the Anglican Church. The sacraments, he said, were the seals of the promises made by God to the Church; since the Church of England was a false church, it could not have received any promises. Therefore, the sacraments amounted to nothing.[1]

In his Demonstration of Discipline the prominent Puritan minister, John Udall, displayed his contempt for canon law when he referred to, "that filthie sinck of the Canon law, which was inuented and patched together, for the confirming and increasing of the kingdome of Antichrist."[2]

Included in the great bulk of Puritan writings were two anonymous pamphlets, the Abstract of Certain Acts of Parliament and the Learned Discourse, both of which attacked the "unlearned ministry" of the Church of England and restated the presbyterian principles. Other Puritan writings included the Defence of the godlie Ministers by Dudley Fenner and the Defence of the Ecclesiastical Discipline, probably

[1]McGinn, pp. 24-29.

[2]Ibid., p. 39.

written by William Travers; but it was not until 1588 that two of the most important nonconformist tracts appeared, causing such a crisis in the argument between presbyterianism and episcopalianism that only separatism could settle the issue.[1]

At least one of these most significant tracts was written by John Penry, a Welshman who had entered Peterhouse College at Cambridge the same year as had Brewster, the two undoubtedly knowing each other well as they shared many of the same interests and beliefs.[2] Penry graduated from Peterhouse and then transferred to Oxford where he received his M.A. in 1586, the year in which he wrote his Aequity, an attack on episcopalianism. Brewster still was serving Sir William Davison at court, and reading Penry's work, Brewster noted that Penry, like most Puritans, had faith in the "inner light" bestowed by God. This belief could and to an extent did work against intellectualism.[3]

In Penry's Exhortation of 1588 a note of desperation was heard in his demand for the removal of the episcopacy and in his insistence that "none ought to be rebaptised," although he was concerned with the validity of the sacrament of baptism. He knew, however, that to question the validity of

[1]McGinn, pp. 40-47.

[2]Willison, p. 33.

[3]McGinn, pp. 49-51.

the Queen's baptism was to question her Christianity. He stated:

> First, wee are already receiued into the boosome of the church, and acknowledged to haue the seale of the couenaunt, in as much as we were once offered and receiued into the nomber of the godly, by the outward element, though corruptly. To what ende then should Baptisme serue vs againe. 2. The absolute necessitie of Baptisme to saluation by this meanes might seeme to bee mainteined. Thirdly, least we should seeme to agree with the hereticall Katabaptistes. Fourthly, other churches haue not publikely decided the cause. Fiftly, that the practise should not inforce them to bee rebaptised, which haue bene alreadie baptised, by such as had commission from the Lord to deale in those mysteries. Lastly, They who (being now in the age of discretion) haue ben baptised by Idoll ministers, are either called or not called to saluation.[1]

Penry also attacked the "dumb ministers" or those who read instead of preaching. Utilizing intentional misprint, misstatement for comic effect, and humorous but derisive epithets, Penry emerged as a writer of religious satire who received much attention. That he may have written the satirical

[1]McGinn, pp. 63-64.

and inflammatory religious tracts signed by a pretended archbishop named Martin Marprelate was a matter for conjecture, although his philosophy, style, and actions, plus the quite conclusive evidence of a series of incriminating events, all pointed to the distinct possibility that Penry was Marprelate. Brewster himself was secretly quite convinced that his old classmate at Peterhouse was the author of the seven Martinist tracts of 1588-89: the Epistle, Epitome, Minerall conclusions, Hay any worke for Cooper, Martin Junior, Martin Senior, and the Protestation, all of which were printed and circulated in secrecy, passing eagerly from hand to hand. Reading them thoroughly, Brewster realized that, although the pamphlets were Puritan in theology, they demonstrated a marked belligerence in tone which indicated a definite separatist spirit. Martin Marprelate knew of his unpopularity among his fellow Puritans because of his reckless daring which they were afraid would harm their cause; nevertheless, he warned the Queen's authorities: "The day that you hange Martin assure yourselues there wil 20. Martins spring in my place."[1]

Penry's Reformation No Enemie, the Briefe Discovery of the Untruthes and Slanders, the Humble Motion with Submission, the Dialogue wherein is plainly laide open, and his Historie of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram reflected the author's conversion,

[1]McGinn, p. 127.

as he finally realized that his doctrine was incongruous with that of the established Church of England; and he left the presbyterianism he had espoused to embrace the congregationalism of Henry Barrowe and John Greenwood, two of the extreme separatist radicals of the Brownist sect.

Brewster and Reverend Clyfton discreetly circulated many of the radical pamphlets among the congregation of the church at Babworth. Among such tracts was Henry Barrowe's A Briefe Discoverie of the False Church which he had written in 1590 while in jail and had had smuggled out to be published in Holland. This work had influenced Penry tremendously in his thinking concerning complete separation, and it was so valued by Brewster that he was to take it with him to the New World.[1]

Barrowe primarily criticized the Church of England for not separating saint from sinner through baptism or excommunication. He wrote that the Church received "all without exception or respect of person . . . not denying baptisme to the seed euen of whores and witches. . . All this people, with all these manners, were in one daye, with the blast of Q. Elizabeths trumpet, of ignorant papistes and grosse idolators, made faithfull Christianes, and true professors." Barrowe believed that the Queen and all the other Church of England members were unbaptized as the Church was a false one,

[1]Willison, p. 62.

and he could not understand Penry's vacillating position on the matter. He agreed with the presbyterians in their views on church government: the true church should consist of two kinds of elders--the pastor and the teacher, and secondly, the governor--as well as consisting of deacons. So far as excommunication was concerned, he was convinced that every church member had the power "publikely to reprove any publike transgression of anie member of the Church, or of the whole Church," and to excommunicate any other member. For Barrowe the ecclesiae was the entire congregation, and the "inner light" bestowed by God was all-important. "The people of Christ," he wrote, "are all inlightened with that bright morning star, that sonne of righteousnes." This enabled the individual to discern the truth. The individual's interpretation of the Scriptures, or "prophesying," was not to be a privilege reserved only for the ministry. It was not to be denied to any member of the congregation. Again the anti-intellectualism inherent in this belief of the "inner light" was illustrated by Barrowe when he wrote demanding the abolition of Oxford and Cambridge: "these uniuersitie colledges are a misseline rowte of very young men for the most part & boies together, leading their liues in idolatrie, confusion, disorder; spending their liues in vanitie, follie, idlnes, liuing neither in the feare of God, nor in any well established order of his Church, neither in any lawful calling in

[3] McGinn, p. 191.

[4] Johnson, p. 30.

the comon welth."[1]

John Greenwood, a strict Brownist, had organized in 1587 in London a Congregational church which espoused the principles of Browne and Barrowe. The latter, along with Penry, was a member of the congregation.[2] Greenwood had added an epilogue to Barrowe's work questioning baptism, but Greenwood did not require rebaptism for an individual baptized in a "false" church. He mainly rejected the use of written prayers and homilies in his An Answere to George Giffordes Pretended Defence of Read Praiers. His writings were not noteworthy; his role as a martyr most assuredly was.[3]

In the London Congregational church there were a pastor, a teacher, two ruling elders and two deacons--a church government reflecting the presbyterianism form as favored by Barrowe. The elders were elected by the entire congregation and were in charge of all administrative matters. This was not the same as Browne's position which recommended that the church members and not only the elders govern the church. English and American Congregationalism for two hundred years was to be influenced more by presbyterianism than by Browne's democratic doctrines.[4]

[1]McGinn, pp. 183-189.

[2]Johnson, p. 29.

[3]McGinn, p. 191.

[4]Johnson, p. 30.

Brewster and Clyfton were tremendously shocked and deeply grieved when travelers from London along the Great North Road told them that Barrowe and Greenwood, after spending five years in prison for their beliefs, had been executed by the royal authorities in April, 1593. Penry suffered the same tragic fate in May of the same year. The news, when related to members of Clyfton's congregation, was received with great consternation. They wondered what would happen to the militant Puritan, Reverend Francis Johnson, a graduate of Cambridge and a fellow student there with Brewster. Johnson since 1587 had been pastor of the London Congregational church which had been organized by Greenwood.[1] He also had been the teacher of John Smyth, an avowed Brownist, who had graduated from Cambridge about 1575. Preaching in Lincoln for several years, Smyth in 1602 settled in Gainsborough in Lincolnshire, twelve miles east of Scrooby.[2] The origin of the Separatist congregation at Gainsborough was described by Nathaniel Morton in New England's Memorial, published in Massachusetts in 1669: "In the year 1602 divers Godly Christians of our English nation, in the north of England, being studious of reformation. . . entered into covenant to walk with God, and one with another. . . according

[1]Willison, pp. 62-63.

[2]Olwen Hedley, The Mayflower and the Pilgrim Fathers (London: British Tourist Authority and Pitkin Pictorials, 1970), p. 6.

to the primitive pattern of the word of God."[1]

Brewster enjoyed attending this congregation as well as that of Clyfton's Babworth church, for Smyth reiterated the beliefs that Brewster had heard constantly while at Cambridge and that he had come to espouse completely. Brewster, Francis Cooke, and many others who attended Smyth's and Clyfton's sermons always had risked the penalties of the law for not attending their own parish church, and all English religious nonconformists had hoped matters would improve when James I came to the English throne in 1603. The Puritans, at a conference in Hampton Court in 1604 called by James in answer to a Puritan petition, asked the King for "liberty of conscience," or the right to worship God as they pleased. James, knowing that the reformers wished to elect their ministers from within their own congregations, foresaw the implicit danger if he would grant such a right to them. If they questioned his right to choose the bishops who, in turn, chose the ministers, would they not soon question his right to govern them in any manner? He was determined to make all conform, or he "would harry out of the land" those who did not.[2]

If matters worsened for the Puritans in general when

[1]Hedley, p. 6.

[2]Feenie Ziner, The Pilgrims and Plymouth Colony (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1961), pp. 34-36.

the King refused to allow them to attempt to reform the Church from within, they worsened drastically for Clyfton's group in particular when in 1604 Reverend Clyfton was deprived of his church due to his refusal to conform to the ecclesiastical dictates of his superiors. Brewster and his family then extended the hospitality of their home to Reverend Clyfton, who brought his family to live at the Scrooby manor.

CHAPTER VIII

THEY KNEW THEY WERE PILGRIMES

In 1606 the Separatist congregation at Gainsborough decided to divide into "2. distincte bodys or churches, & in regarde of distance of place did congregate severally," according to William Bradford.[1] The group was too large to enable it to meet without attracting the attention of the authorities, so a small congregation of about forty or fifty people began to meet secretly at Scrooby Manor at Brewster's invitation and with Clyfton as their pastor. Smyth's group soon fled to Amsterdam and there joined the Brethren of the Separation of the First English Church, or the Ancient Brethren, the group originally organized in London in 1587 by John Greenwood but now relocated, due to persecution, in Amsterdam.

It was in that Dutch city that Smyth wrestled with two momentous problems that had occurred to him: first, the Bible might not be the true Word of God but could have been written by man. Smyth thought that if there were any doubt, it would be better to dispense entirely with Bible usage in the services and to rely on the Spirit as It spoke from man's

[1]Bradford, p. 27.

heart. Secondly, according to Smyth, not a true Christian existed, as baptism was an act of faith; and infants, when baptized, could not confess their faith nor was there anyone properly baptized himself to perform the rite. Smyth went so far as to baptize himself, after having disbanded the church and then starting it again after his self-baptism. He became known as the Self-Baptizer or the Se-Baptist and, although the leaders of the Scrooby congregation could never accept his radical theology, he did contribute a great deal to the Separatist movement. In his later life he removed himself completely from all ritualistic controversy and from the biting intolerance some of his beliefs had fostered. Admitting he had made errors, he spent his last years concerned with salvation.[1]

The Scrooby group with Clyfton as pastor and Brewster as elder soon was joined by John Robinson, a native of the neighboring village of Sturton-le-Steeple in Lincolnshire. Robinsonalso was a graduate of Cambridge and had served as pastor of St. Andrew's in Norwich until he became one of the three hundred clergymen who lost their positions because they would not conform to the stringent new decrees dictated by King James after the Hampton Court Conference. After leaving Norwich, Robinson and his wife probably returned to Sturton-le-Steeple where he undoubtedly came to know Brewster

[1]Willison, pp. 71-72, 80.

and Smyth, perhaps becoming a member of the Gainsborough church. With the division of the congregation, however, he definitely became a member of the Scrooby group and accepted the position as teacher, a position second only in importance to that of Clyfton.[1]

Each Separatist church seemed to have its own rules concerning the functions and duties of pastors, teachers, and elders. In general, however, the pastor attended to exhortation, taught the Word of God by preaching not by reading, prayed for the congregation, administered the communion, and visited the sick. The teacher attended to the doctrine and was the pastor's assistant. The elder called church meetings, prepared matters for such meetings, acted as guide and moderator during them, and preached in the pastor's absence.[2]

Robinson, in his role as teacher for the Scrooby group, was able to draw from his extensive religious background which had included contact with Dr. Laurence Chadderton, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and with William Perkins, a lecturer and preacher of the "forward" theology at Great St. Andrews and author of a catechism later used by the Separatists. These men believed in the Calvinistic doctrines,

[1]Peter Loon, The Pilgrims' Faith (Reading, Berkshire, England: Bradley and Son Ltd., 1970), pp. 20-21.

[2]Bradford, ed. Davis, p. 26.

and Robinson thought their theology was the same as that found in St. Paul's Letters. For these men and for Robinson, salvation through God's grace, received by faith in Christ, was the true and undeniable message of the Gospel. After his expulsion from Norwich for his strong convictions, Robinson had gathered together a group of friends for Bible study and prayer. Excommunicated by the Bishop, he then turned to separatism.[1]

Francis Cooke immediately felt Robinson's influence added to that of Brewster, Clyfton, and also to that of a young man nearer Cooke's own age, William Bradford, who had become Francis' very good friend. Through the spring and summer of 1607 the Scrooby group continued to meet secretly each Sunday at the Manor House, once owned, ironically enough, by a member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy now so despised by the Separatists. United in doctrine, purpose, and spirit, this small congregation met with staunch but fearful hearts. Then, in September of that year, Brewster resigned, or was forced to resign his postmastership, as the authorities had discovered the secret meetings and had begun to hound the group relentlessly. Five members, one of whom was Brewster, were commanded to appear before the Court of High Commission at York for "disobedience in religion," and Brewster was

[1]Loon, p. 21.

fined heavily.[1] Bradford wrote of these persecutions in his history:

> But after these things they could not long continue in any peaceable condition, but were hunted & persecuted on every side, so as their former afflections were but as flea-bitings in comparison of these which now came upon them. For some were taken & clapt up in prison, others had their houses besett & watcht night and day, & hardly escaped their hands; and the most were faine to flie & leave their howses & habitations, and the means of their livelehood. Yet these & many other sharper things which affterward befell them, were no other then they looked for, and therfore were the better prepared to bear them by the assistance of Gods grace & spirite. Yet seeing them selves thus molested, and that ther was no hope of their continuance ther, by a joynte consente they resolved to goe into the Low Countries, wher they heard was freedome of Religion for all men; as also how sundrie from London, & other parts of the land, had been exiled and persecuted for the same cause, & were gone thither, and lived at Amsterdam, & in other places of the land. So affter they had continued

[1]Willison, p. 54.

> togeither aboute a year, and kept their meetings every Saboth in one place or other, exercising the worship of God amongst them selves, notwithstanding all the dilligence & malice of their adverssaries, they seeing they could no longer continue in that condition, they resolved to get over into Holland as they could; which was in the year 1607. & 1608.[1]

Continuing his account of the Pilgrims, Bradford told of their settling in Amsterdam and their subsequent removal to Leyden in this manner:

> Now when Mr. Robinson, Mr. Brewster, & other principall members were come over, (for they were of the last, & stayed to help the weakest over before them,) such things were thought on as were necessarie for their setling and best ordering of the church affairs. And when they had lived at Amsterdam aboute a year, Mr. Robinson, their pastor, and some others of best discerning, seeing how Mr. John Smith and his companie was allready fallen in to contention with the church that was ther before them, & no means they could use would doe any good to cure the same, and also that the flames of contention were like to breake out in that anciente church it selfe (as affterwards

[1]Bradford, pp. 27-28.

> lamentably came to pass); which things they prudently foreseeing, thought it was best to remove, before they were any way engaged with the same; . . . For these & some other reasons they removed to Leyden, a fair & bewtifull citie. . .[1]

An English law forbade subjects of the Crown to leave England without the permission of the authorities, so the escape to Holland was dangerous and costly. Francis Cooke, bachelor from Blyth, after much soul-searching and discussions with Brewster, Clyfton, Robinson, and with members of his own family, made one of the greatest decisions of his life and escaped to Leyden. He may have been with the group in Amsterdam; there is no doubt that he was with the congregation in Leyden. There were only twenty-one persons of the original Scrooby group there, and that included four small children. Francis and many others were heartsick when their beloved Reverend Clyfton, in failing health, had decided to remain in Amsterdam with the Ancient Brethren rather than to continue on to Leyden. It then became the responsibility of John Robinson to accept the position as pastor and to lead the way as the group started the next stage of the long, arduous search for a place in which they might worship God in their own manner.

Pastor Robinson was a godsend to his congregation.

[1]Bradford, pp. 33-34.

More rigid and self-righteous in his views at an earlier date, he had become increasingly tolerant, and his learning and liberal attitude influenced immensely the men who were to be the leaders of a new colony in the New World. Their beloved mentor's principles were well expressed in the Scrooby Covenant of 1606 which stated that they were shaking off "this yoake of antichristian bondage, and as ye Lord's free people joyned themselves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in ye felowship of ye gospell, to walke in all his wayes made known or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them."[1] It was Robinson who had petitioned the burgomasters of Leyden, seeking permission for his congregation to settle there and receiving it. Bradford wrote of his pastor:

> . . . And if at any time any differences arose, or offences broak out (as it cannot be, but some time ther will, even amongst the best of men) they were ever so mete with, and nipt in the head betims, or otherwise so well composed as still love, peace, and communion was continued; or els the church purged of those that were incurable & incorrigible, when, after much patience used, no other means would serve, which seldom came to pass. Yea such

[1]Willison, p. 49.

> was the mutuall love, & reciprocall respecte that this worthy man had to his flocke, and his flocke to him. . . that it was hard to judge wheather he delighted more in having shuch a people, or they in haveing such a pastor. His love was greate towards them, and his care was all ways bente for their best good, both for soule and body; for besids his singuler abilities in devine things (wherin he excelled), he was also very able to give directions in civill affaires, and to foresee dangers & inconveniences; by which means he was very helpfull to their outward estate, & so was every way as a commone father unto them.[1]

In Leyden Robinson attended the University, debated religious issues, and wrote in defense of the Separatist cause. His first work was entitled A Justification of Separation from the Church of England, against Mr. Richard Bernard, his invective entitled 'The Separatists Schisme'. Vicar of Worksop, Bernard at one time had entertained the idea of becoming a separatist but had abandoned the thought and, in 1610, was attempting to dissuade any who might be contemplating Brownism. Robinson replied by asserting that the Church of England was not formed according to the model set forth in the New Testament, and he scorned the conditions for

[1]Bradford, pp. 34-35.

membership in the Anglican Church with this observation:

> A man may go out of these countries where I now live, as many do, and hire a house in any parish of the land in England. . . and then become, by the right of his house or farm, a member of the parish church where he dwells; yes, though he have been nursed up all his life in Popery or Atheism, and though he were formerly neither of any church or religion. Yes, though he should profess that he did not look to be saved by Christ only and alone, but by his good meanings and well doings.[1]

This was directly antithetical to the beliefs of Separatism which, stated by Robinson, were, "that a company consisting though but of two or three, separated from the world . . . and gathered together into the name of Christ by a covenant made to walk in all the ways of God known unto them, is a church, and so hath the whole power of Christ."[2] He continued:

> The Lord Jesus is the king of his church alone, upon whose shoulders the government is, and unto whom all power is given in heaven and earth; yet hath he not received this power for himself alone, but doth communicate the same with the church as

[1]Burgess, p. 115.

[2]Ibid., p. 115.

> the husband with the wife. And as he is 'anointed by God with the oil of gladness above his fellows', so doth he communicate this anointing. . . to every member of the body, and so makes every one of them severally kings and priests and all jointly a kingly priesthood or communion of kings, priests and prophets. And in this holy fellowship by virtue of this plenteous anointment every one is made a king, priest and prophet not only to himself but to every other, yea, to the whole--a prophet to teach, exhort, reprove and comfort himself and the rest; a priest to offer up spiritual sacrifices of prayer; praises and thanksgiving for himself and the rest; a king to guide and govern in the ways of godliness himself and the rest. . .[1]

Francis Cooke knew these were the beliefs of Separatism in general, but he realized that Robinson was adding more to those doctrines by stressing tolerance and brotherhood and another quality later to become known as democratic principles but repugnant by that term during Jacobean times. Francis agreed wholeheartedly with his beloved pastor's explanation:

> Our faith is not negative, as papists used to object to the evangelical churches; now which

[1]Burgess, pp. 116-117.

consists in the condemning of others, and wiping their names out of the bead-roll of churches, but in the edifying of ourselves; neither require we of any of ours in the confession of their faith, that they either renounce, or in one word, contest with the Church of England, whatsoever the world clamours of us this way.

If by the church be understood the Catholic Church dispersed upon the face of the whole earth, we do willingly acknowledge that a singular part thereof, and the same visible and conspicious, is to be found in the land and with it do profess and practice, what in us lays, communion in all things, in themselves lawful and done in right order.

If in anthing we err, advertise us brotherly with desire of our information, and not, as our countrymen's manner for the most part is, with a mind of reproaching us or gratifying of others; and whom thou findest in error, thou shalt not leave in obstinacy, nor as having a mind prone to schism.[1]

Francis particularly admired Robinson's regard for the place of the laity in the churches and for his constant searching after truth. Francis realized that Robinson was a

[1]John Robinson, "Works," The Mayflower Quarterly, Vol. 32, No. 1 (February, 1966), pp. 14-15.

very special man--one who was able to adhere to his strong spiritual beliefs but capable of tempering them with compassion and charity. Said Robinson:

> I am verily persuaded there are in many congregations many that truly fear God: (and the Lord increase their number, and graces) and if they were separated from the rest into visible communion, I should not doubt to account them such congregations, as unto which God had given his sacraments . . . I doubt not but the truths taught in Rome have been effectual to the saving of many.[1]

Robinson's gentle and wise tolerance proved attractive to many others for within five years there were about three hundred members of his congregation. The original twenty-one Scrooby members were joined by many Dutch and French-speaking Walloons, among whom was Hester Mahieu whom Francis Cooke married in Leyden. The Walloons had lived near the Belgic border of France but, due to religious persecution in their own country, those who were Huguenots or French Protestants had moved to Holland or to England.[2] Hester was listed on the marriage record in Leyden as being from Canterbury in England, and there was at the time of her marriage a large

[1]John Robinson, "Justification of Separation," The Mayflower Quarterly, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

[2]Bradford, ed. Davis, p. 42.

Walloon church at Canterbury with church records showing a certain number of baptisms, marriages, and deaths of persons by the name of Mahieu.[1] The marriage of Hester and Francis was a civil ceremony, the form used in Holland, for the Separatists agreed wholeheartedly with the Dutch that the rite of marriage was not a function of the minister as it was in the Church of England, but a function of civil magistrates. However, following the civil ceremony, there was probably no merrymaking as was the Dutch custom, for the Separatists did not approve of such celebrations. Francis worked arduously long hours as a woolcomber to provide for his family which came to include four children born to him and Hester during their years together in Leyden.[2]

The Cooke family attended the congregational meetings which were held at the old house known as Green Gate, used also as a parsonage by the Robinsons, and which had been purchased with considerable sacrifice by the impoverished congregation. Each Sunday the services began at eight o'clock with the men and women sitting apart on the hard wooden benches and the children grouped together under the watchful eye of a deacon. This ancient Hebraic custom of dividing the men and the women was called "dignifying the meeting," and the

[1]Hubert Kinney Shaw (comp.), Families of The Pilgrims--Francis Cooke (Boston: Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1955), p. 4.

[2]Willison, p. 446.

Separatists were to continue it in the New World. Their place of worship was called the "meetinghouse" to distinguish it from the term "church," which they so vigorously hated. The code of conduct by which they lived their daily lives was called the Holy Discipline of Christ. They stood during the opening prayer which oftentimes lasted an hour. Kneeling was never permitted as they considered it a form of the Catholic Church and of the Church of England. Psalms were sung with no musical accompaniment for they considered the organ the "devil's bag-pipe," and the Geneva Bible was used with the passages that were read aloud always elucidated and interpreted, as "dumb reading" was not allowed. Generally wearing a black suit and black gloves, Robinson sermonized for several hours from a small table which rested upon a low dais. Another psalm followed the sermon, and on appropriate Sundays the sacraments were administered. The collection was taken, the benediction given, and the congregation went home for the midday meal.[1]

Early in the afternoon the second service began with an opening prayer or a short sermon by the pastor. Then followed a general discussion called "prophesying" during which the men could argue their versions of Biblical texts. The women always remained silent during this time, for, according to the beliefs of the Separatists, St. Paul had prohibited

[1]Willison, pp. 86-87.

women from having a voice in the church. They could assemble by themselves, however, for discussion and prayer.[1]

Robinson's congregation was known by no particular name in Leyden nor was it the only English church there. The Ancient Brethren had remained in Amsterdam, of course, with Francis Johnson; in Leyden, however, there had been established a Scottish Presbyterian Church. Due to Robinson's tolerant attitude, the two congregations often worshipped and had fellowship together. Later the Scottish Church was to absorb into its group those of Robinson's congregation who did not go to the New World.[2]

Francis Cooke, however, as well as many of the congregation, was becoming very restless and discontent during his sojourn in Leyden. Blessed with an excellent wife and a fine family, Francis still felt disenchanted with the whole atmosphere in the city. He did not dispute the fact that here he had freedom of religion; here he and his family were able to follow their beloved Brewster and Robinson and the dictates of their own consciences. Francis, however, was basically an English farmer, and, like most of the English in Holland, he had had to learn a trade to eke out a meager existence. Hence he had become a woolcomber, working excruciatingly long hours to provide for his family, but there was never enough money.

[1]Willison, p. 87.

[2]Ibid., pp. 89-90.

He worried that his children would grow up with no English heritage or recollections; worse than this, however, was the fact that most of the English young people had been forced to work in shops and mills to earn money, and these were aging before their time. Already many of the young men had left to become soldiers and sailors to avoid this, and Francis was afraid this might happen to his oldest son, John, if they remained in Holland until the boy was grown. His children also complained about having to spend all of Sunday at meeting while their Dutch friends were enjoying themselves. Of course there were those of the congregation who had been completely absorbed into the Dutch culture; Francis, while able to appreciate many Dutch customs and institutions, could not and did not want to deny that he was English; nor could he surmount his feeling that Leyden was not the entire answer.

Confronted with these problems, some of the Separatists had given some thought to removal to the New World as they had read Captain John Smith's fascinating account of his trip to New England in 1614 and Sir Walter Raleigh's story of his expedition to Guiana. They knew about the English colony at Jamestown, Virginia, and were pondering the question of removal when a grave problem arose that gave great impetus to their thoughts of leaving Holland as the difficulty involved Elder Brewster himself.

Brewster, in partnership with Thomas Brewer, a well-to-do Englishman who belonged to the Leyden Scottish Church,

had set up a print shop or publishing house in Choir Alley in Leyden. Enlisting the aid of John Reynolds, a master printer from London, and of an assistant, Edward Winslow, also of London, Brewster and Brewer proceeded to set about to further the Separatist cause in England. The first books printed were harmless enough, and all bore the imprint of the shop: Apud Guilielmum Brewsterum: in vico Chorali (at William Brewster's office in Choir Alley).[1] Among such works were Commentarii in Proverbia Salomonis by Thomas Cartwright with a preface by Polyander, Grevinchovius on the Arminian controversy, A Confutation of the Rhemists' Translation of the New Testament by Cartwright, De Vera et Genuina Jesu Christi Religione, A Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Tenne Commandements by Dod and Cleaver, sermons by William Perkins, and John Robinson's The People's Plea for the Exercise of Prophesy.[2]

Brewster's press then began to publish, without the imprint of the shop, works which were critical of the Church of England and which found their way into England, falling into the hands of King James' bishops. By far the most inflammatory of these books was the Perth Assembly by David Calderwood, a Scottish minister who was attacking the King's

[1]Loon, p. 37.

[2]Bradford, ed. Davis, p. 39. See also: Willison, pp. 95-96.

attempt to control the Church of Scotland. Published in 1619, copies of the book were smuggled into Scotland and King James, upon discovering this, was furious. He assigned his ambassador in Holland the task of apprehending those responsible for stirring up sedition by publishing such material.[1] Brewster, negotiating in London with the Virginia Company and his old friend, Sir Edwin Sandys, concerning permission for a Separatist settlement in the New World, discreetly disappeared after eluding the authorities and remained in hiding until the Mayflower was ready to depart for foreign shores. The others with whom he was associated in the publishing venture sought refuge in various places, and the Choir Alley press was confiscated by the authorities.[2]

Now the Separatists were certain that they must take the action that they had been contemplating. Many were the meetings that Francis attended, listening especially to the words of Bradford and Robinson, as the older mentors, Clyfton and Brewster, were no longer with the group. Negotiations with the English Crown and with the London Virginia Company and the aid provided by Sir Edwin Sandys, treasurer of the Company and son of the Archbishop of York who had owned Scrooby, had brought about the obtaining of a patent for the Separatists to colonize. This patent was now to no avail,

[1]Willison, pp. 97-98.

[2]Loon, p. 38.

for the Company was bankrupt and could not provide the necessary funds. The Dutch New Netherlands Company then offered them free transportation and cattle, but this offer was rejected by the Separatists. Next Thomas Weston, an ironmonger from London, arrived on the scene offering an agreement to set up a profitable trade with the New World if the Separatists would enter a joint stock corporation with him and his business partners and would plant their colony within the area assigned to the Plymouth Virginia Company. The terms of the contract between adventurers, or the investors and planters, and the settlers called for a seven-year period during which all profits were to be commonly owned. At the end of the seven years houses, land, and goods were to be divided between the settlers and the adventurers on the basis of the shares owned. Land brought under cultivation and home lots were to be left in the settlers' possession, and the colonists were to have two days a week to work for themselves. The Leyden congregation, however, was not consulted when Weston changed the contract's terms to suit his partners. The provisions for the undivided home lots and for the two days per week for oneself were deleted.[1]

Francis and many others in the congregation considered the new terms an insult and not befitting honest men, and there were now so many of the congregation unable or unwilling

[1]Loon, p. 52.

to go that others would have to be found to undertake the trip if the group were to withstand the wilderness. Bradford recalled:

> Some, from their reasons & hops conceived, laboured to stirr up & incourage the rest to undertake & prosecute the same; others, againe, out of their fears, objected against it, & sought to diverte from it, aledging many things, and those neither unreasonable nor unprobable; as that it was a great designe, and subjecte to many unconceivable perills & dangers; as, besids the casulties of the seas (which none can be freed from) the length of the vioage was such, as the weake bodys of women and other persons worne out with age and traville (as many of them were) could never be able to endure. And yet if they should, the miseries of the land which they should be exposed unto, would be to hard to be borne; and lickly, some or all of them togeither, to consume & utterly to ruinate them. For ther they should be liable to famine, and nakednes, and the wante, in a maner, of all things. The chang of aire, diate, & drinking of water, would infecte their bodies with sore sickneses, and greevous diseases, and also those which should escape or overcome these difficulties, should yett be in

> continuall danger of the salvage people, who are cruell, barbarous, & most trecherous. . .[1]

A small group led by Elder Brewster, who would be on the Mayflower when it sailed, would go first and would be composed of volunteers from among the congregation and recruits signed up in London. Pastor Robinson would remain in Leyden with the larger group which promised to help survivors return to Leyden if the expedition failed. If the colony were successful, those left in Leyden would join it as soon as possible. Francis prayed for long intervals privately, as well as at the meetinghouse, for divine guidance. He could not expose Hester and four children to the perils of an unknown land, yet after an agonizing turmoil of deliberation, Francis knew that he must go; he must volunteer for the tremendous undertaking. He could not return to England, and, although he thoroughly approved of Dutch religious freedom and many of the institutions of the Netherlands, he did not want his family to remain in Leyden where his children would grow up to be more Dutch than English. Restless and impatient with the life he was living and hoping for something better, he believed wholeheartedly and enthusiastically in the Separatist cause and in its prospect of planting a colony in the New World incorporating the beliefs of that cause. He had such implicit faith in his beloved mentor, Brewster, and

[1]Bradford, p. 40.

in his pastor, Robinson, because of the kind of men they were and because of the teachings with which they had clarified his thinking, that he had followed them in hazardous adventurers; and he would continue to accompany Brewster and his other great friend, Bradford, in the most perilous undertaking they yet had attempted. Francis was a realist, yet an optimist and a true son of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages. He possessed a great love of adventure, and, since leaving England, he had discovered that he was able with God's help to adapt and adjust in fair measure to the conditions and situations that he had had to face. He and Hester knew that he must go, and he would take John, his eldest child, with him, for the boy could do a man's work and was wise beyond his tender years. Hester and the other three children would follow as soon as possible after discovering if the colony would survive. He would be one of the four original members of the Scrooby congregation to undertake the voyage.

Pastor Robinson proclaimed a "day of solleme humiliation" before the group departed and took his text from Ezra 8. 21: "And ther at the river, by Ahava, I proclaimed a fast, that we might humble ourselves before our God, and seeke of him a right way for us, and for our children, and for all our substance."[1]

[1]Bradford, p. 52.

Edward Winslow, writing in later years his recollections of Robinson's farewell address to this group from his congregation, remembered:

> We were now ere long to part asumder; and the Lord knoweth whether ever he should live to see our faces again. But whether the Lord had appointed it nor not; he charged us, before God and his blessed angels, to follow him no further than he followed Christ: and if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any truth by his Ministry. For he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy Word.
>
> He took occasion also miserably to bewail the state and condition of the Reformed Churches, who were come to a period in religion; and would go no further than the Instruments of their Reformation. . . we should use all means to avoid and shake off the name of 'Brownist,' being a mere nickname and brand to make religion odious and the Professors of it, to the Christian world. . . 'And be not loath to take another Pastor or Teacher,' saith he, 'for that Flock that hath two Shepherds is not endangered, but secured by it.'[1]

[1]Burgess, pp. 239-240.

Although John Robinson never reached the new colony as he died in Holland, he had helped to formulate the government under which they would live, for in his farewell letter to that part of the congregation that would make the trip he advised:

> Lastly, whereas you are to become a Body Politic, using amongst yourselves Civil Government, and are not furnished with any persons of special eminency above the rest to be chosen by you into Office of Government, let your wisdom and godliness appear, not only in choosing such persons as do entirely love, and will diligently promote, the common good; but also in yielding unto them all due honour and obedience in their lawful administrations. Not beholding in them the ordinariness of their persons, but God's ordinance for your good, nor being like unto the foolish multitude, who more honour the gay coat than either the virtuous mind of the man, or glorious ordinance of the Lord.[1]

Theirs was to be an experiment in which the democratical principles applied in their form of church government would be applied to their civil government, and the voice of the majority was to regulate their affairs. They insisted on the independence of each congregation and, in this manner, each

[1]Burgess, p. 255.

minister was under the watchful eyes of the members of his church. Although the Separatists basically believed in democratic individualism as opposed to control exerted by the state, their new colony was to advance God's kingdom on earth by a coordination of church and state--a theocracy in which magistrate, minister, and layman would attempt to solve the problems of the colony.

Later writing his History demonstrating the divine mission of these Separatists, Bradford remembered the ordeal of their departure from Holland:

> . . . And the time being come that they must depart, they were accompanied with most of their brethren out of the citie, unto a towne sundrie miles of called Delfes-Haven, wher the ship lay ready to receive them. So they lefte that goodly & pleasante citie, which had been ther resting place near 12. years; but they knew they were pilgrimes, & looked not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest cuntrie, and quieted their spirits.[1]

Francis Cooke was ready. Amid the abundance of tears and heartbreak he still could feel an exaltation and an intense eagerness. Perhaps, as Bradford thought, they really were His new chosen people and were beginning to live the

[1]Bradford, pp. 52-53.

story of a new Exodus. Their colony then would be the culmination and fulfillment of the spirit of the Reformation--the living proof of man's right to worship his Maker in his own fashion.

Although Francis would not have agreed with the theology of his contemporary, John Donne, Anglican priest, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and poet, Francis' philosophy, shaped and formulated in great part by what other men had thought and written, would have been in harmony with that imparted by Donne when he wrote:

> No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.[1]

[1]John Bartlett, "Devotion XVII," Familiar Quotations, ed. Emily Morison Beck (14th ed., 1855; rpt. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968), p. 308.

EPILOGUE

REFLECTIONS OF AN EPILOGIST

Some sage once observed that the excitement of the hunt was in the chase, not in the finality of the search. This bit of wisdom is most applicable in the case of the intriguing enigma of Francis Cooke, man of the Mayflower, for whom as yet there is little positive ascertainment of many facts pertaining to his life before he reached the shores of America. Researchers delving into the factual material concerning the lives of many who made the Mayflower trip have been amply rewarded in many cases; facts concerning Francis, however, are elusive and non-conclusive, and he still remains somewhat shrouded in mystery and conjecture. The ceaseless investigation, nevertheless, on the part of those who are attempting to retrace the footsteps of this American Pilgrim is fascinating, albeit exhausting and baffling.

After a great deal of arduous but thoroughly enjoyable personal genealogical research, due principally to my innate curiosity and an abiding interest in the continuity of families, I discovered that Francis Cooke was the first branch on my American family tree. The two inevitable questions of who the man was and why he would undertake so devastating a voyage have haunted me ever since. Although idle ancestor

worship is not my forte, the idea of this man, probably inconsequential in the social structure of his time but possessing the mental and physical fortitude to follow his belief in the personal independence of man's spirit, has always been most appealing. Undoubtedly many of the great ideas and philosophies of his era, as well as those of centuries predating him, unconsciously influenced him to make his momentous decision to leave the known world for that of the unknown. Such ideas and philosophies assumed a most human practicality in and were undeniably demonstrated by the rather impractical departure of some of the Separatists from Holland for a new continent.

A trip back to England and to Francis' old haunts resulted in the culmination of my curiosity. After a quarter of a century of intermittently pursuing this shadow, this modern reversal of Francis' trip was, for me, a captivating journey into another world; and it provided an enchantment which language is hard pressed to re-create or to express. Through imagination and background and with the able assistance of many English people, it was possible for me, to a great extent, to recapture some of the essence of the era and the area in which Francis lived.

Those who live near noteworthy sites oftentimes care little or nothing for the history of their area, and this was quite evident in England's Pilgrim country. Small markers are sprinkled here and there throughout the area, but if one

did not know exactly for what he was searching, important sites could be overlooked very easily. Too, if those who actually know or possess factual information cannot be located, the researcher finds himself highly frustrated. While the trip did not contribute substantially to the body of factual knowledge which has already been gleaned about Francis, it did provide an insight into the geographical and physical factors that helped mold the man, as well as heightening my interest in an individual through whose mind could and did flow in practical measure the essence of the Reformation. The Pilgrims, of course, have not been an important part of English history; in fact by some Englishmen they have been considered deserters. However, as I visited one afternoon with Reverend Edmund F. Jessup, rector of the Babworth Church where Reverend Clyfton once preached and an author who is recognized on both sides of the Atlantic as an eminent Pilgrim scholar, he made the remark that the English are realizing more and more that the Pilgrims were actually about two hundred years ahead of their time in their religious thinking.

Traveling through Pilgrim country wrought a certain personal addiction for the locality. Each mile can relate its own fascinating past, while the entirety is amalgamated into the background of one of the greatest adventures of English and American history. Sites visited were Bradford's home and the church at Austerfield; the cells in which some of the

Pilgrims were incarcerated at Boston-on-the-Wash; Warwick Castle where John Foxe's Book of Martyrs was seen; Brewster's manor house and the church at Scrooby and the famous old North Road, now almost a country lane, which winds through the village; the Babworth Church; Francis Cooke's hamlet of Blyth with its old Norman church and its antiquated and charming Angel Inn from whose cellar runs a tunnel built in the time of Henry VIII; Canterbury Cathedral and the area within it known as the largest Norman crypt in the world and ceded as a church to French refugees in the sixteenth century among whom, undoubtedly, was Hester Mayhieu, later to be Hester Cooke; and many other places too numerous to mention but too important to be forgotten. Fascinating but frustrating was my attempt to decipher pages written in Elizabethan and even older script in the Nottinghamshire Record Office where the Blyth Church records are kept, and where one feels a certain awe in being allowed, after paying a small fee, to see and touch such treasures of antiquity. Proving very fruitful were my conversations with Reverend Jessup, with Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Dunstan, who own Scrooby manor which is now used for the housing of tenant farmers and farm laborers as well as owning most of the land around Scrooby, and with Worksop's lord mayoress and its city solicitor. The latter two provided me with a history of the locality under the old Danelaw which governed this north-central area including Sherwood Forest. They also related how Mary Queen of Scots had spent a part of

her imprisonment at Worksop, once a manor owned by George Talbot, appointed by Queen Elizabeth as custodian of the Scottish Queen. Talbot was one of a succession of husbands of Bess of Hardwick, probably the most influential woman of her day in England barring Queen Elizabeth herself.

As all of this information filtered through my mind, Francis Cooke began to assume a real identity; he became almost flesh and blood in one's thoughts. Research may never be able to relate his story with complete facts; there are those who would have him a scion of nobility. Certainly among his descendants there were numbered many distinguished names--Franklin D. Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Winston Churchill through his mother, Jenny Jerome--as well as hundreds of unknown descendants who have provided, if nothing more, the continuity of the family. Whatever his background, evidence and imagination can make Francis a man of his time, a thinking individual of the great exuberant Elizabethan age; and they can also shape him into a synthesis of all Pilgrims--intolerant to a degree, revolutionary and radical, but also zealous, fiercely independent, resourceful, democratic for their time, and filled with the courage of their convictions. They were not anti-intellectual nor entirely devoid of merriment, and they have been blamed for many of the intolerances of the Massachusetts Bay Colony which later absorbed them. They were not meek, drab, humble pietists, but English men and women unhappy with old ways and impatient and eager to

change what they could for their spiritual betterment. They were innovators within an innovative age.

The Pilgrims would probably scoff at the tradition and ceremony which now surrounds their memory as they were never ones to cherish something merely because it was customary. They believed in the present and attempted to better it for themselves. With this in mind, this work has been written for those of mine who must fashion the present for themselves knowing that within the present is the past--for those of mine who cannot help but wonder where the future may take them but who, perhaps with the reading of this work, will know from whence they have come.

> New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
> They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth;
> Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must Pilgrims be,
> Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
> Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.[1]

[1]James Russell Lowell, "The Present Crisis: 1844," The American Mind, eds. Harry Warfel, et al., (New York: American Book Company, 1937), p. 727.

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